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Dance and Dancers

AUGUST 1960

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Personality of the Month

DAVID ELLIS

NOTHING succeeds like succession, and it must be accounted as one of the most hopeful aspects of that ever-youthful organisation, Ballet Rambert, that it has a second generation leader in the wings. In the case of David Ellis that convenient Americanism is almost literally true, for Ellis, the company's Associate Director, is Marie Rambert's son-in-law. Yet, as Rambert herself would be the first to admit, her Associate Director is working for the company, not inheriting it.

Ellis was born in 1921, and educated at Westminster and University College, Oxford. He qualified as a doctor, but soon found that medicine was not his true vocation. He trained as a dancer under Vera Volkova while he was still a medical student, and after gaining experience in one or two small companies, he joined the Ballet Rambert in 1946. He was a useful but never a brilliant dancer, and after marrying Angela Dukes (Rambert's daughter), together with his new wife he left England for a time to work in South America.

In 1951 they were both back in England, and they persuaded Ashley Dukes to lend them the Mercury Theatre, where they started Ballet Workshop, an organisation that was both the first experimental workshop organisation in British ballet and also, in a sense, the successor to Rambert's pre-war Ballet Club. Ballet Workshop gave chances to many talented choreographers (among them Jack Carter, Michael Charnley, Peter Darrell and Michael Holmes), but it also gave a chance to Ellis himself to try out his powers as an artistic director and administrator.

Even before Ballet Workshop in 1954 eventually closed its Sabbath doors for the last time, Ellis was working with the Ballet Rambert as an assistant to Rambert herself. In 1955 the arrangement became, as it were, official, and Ellis was listed as the company's Associate Director — the first in its long history. At the opening of the 1957 London season, Rambert brought Ellis on stage, as if to introduce him to the ballet public, and since then he has played an ever-increasing part in the fortunes and destiny of the company.

Marie Rambert is one of the two great pioneers of British ballet, and her name will be honoured wherever ballet is taught with an English accent. Her place is primarily that of the great discoverer of talent, but when the list of those discoveries is finally drawn up, we can be sure that her farsighted choice of successor will not be among the least.

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Dance and Dancers

Editor: PETER WILLIAMS *Associate Editor:* CLIVE BARNES
Assistant Editor: E. C. Mason.

WORLD'S LARGEST SALE IN THE FIELD

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Red Sky in the Morning

YOU may or may not believe in signs and portents — of cats washing behind their ears, leaves showing their reverse side, red skies in the morning, all foretelling dirty weather — and many other such other little unlikely episodes said to give warning of future happiness or disaster. You may not believe them, but often there is a modicum of truth in them — however much we try to convince ourselves otherwise.

In every branch of art there is an off-period, a space of time ranging from two or three years to possibly as much as fifty, when it sinks back to near oblivion or just marks academic time. Then something happens — the appearance of a new Messiah, or some wave of new thought and appreciation — and that art starts off again on the up and up. In ballet, such off-moments occur when it starts to become monumental and weighed down by Byzantine organisations, a sort of bumbling Goliath awaiting the sling-slung stone of a future David.

So if you believe in the portents which foretell these stagnant periods then you might possibly consider the programmes to be given by the Royal Ballet during their forthcoming season in New York. Now it is an open secret that nearly everything the Royal Ballet does is mainly geared to its American tours — certainly more to that country than to any other outside Britain. Hardly surprising this as it is in America that the Royal Ballet is most appreciated, or so we are continually having rammed down our throats whenever we utter a word of protest about anything that happens on home ground. For America read New York, and that city is to have a month of full-length ballets apart from three performances covering two days. In these two days, New Yorkers will get a keyhole glimpse of what amounts to the newest thing in ballet that Britain has to offer with Cranko's *Antigone* and MacMillan's *Le Baiser de la Fée*. Of course you might say, and rightly, that amongst that mass of full-length classics there are also performances of Ashton's *Ondine* and *La Fille Mal Gardée*, which are in their respective ways wholly admirable, and one would not wish to detract from them in any way whatsoever, but their very success points strongly to a future of full-length works, and that *could* become unutterably boring. It is all very well to declare that the public only likes such ballets — they may today, which doesn't mean that they will not turn from them in the very near future. It would be better to observe this red sky while the morning is yet young and prepare for the stormy weather.

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DANCE MAGAZINE, N.Y., ANN BARZEL SAYS OF CLAUDIA CRAVEY— ". . . *the only academic parallel would be if a child of two could read fluently"*

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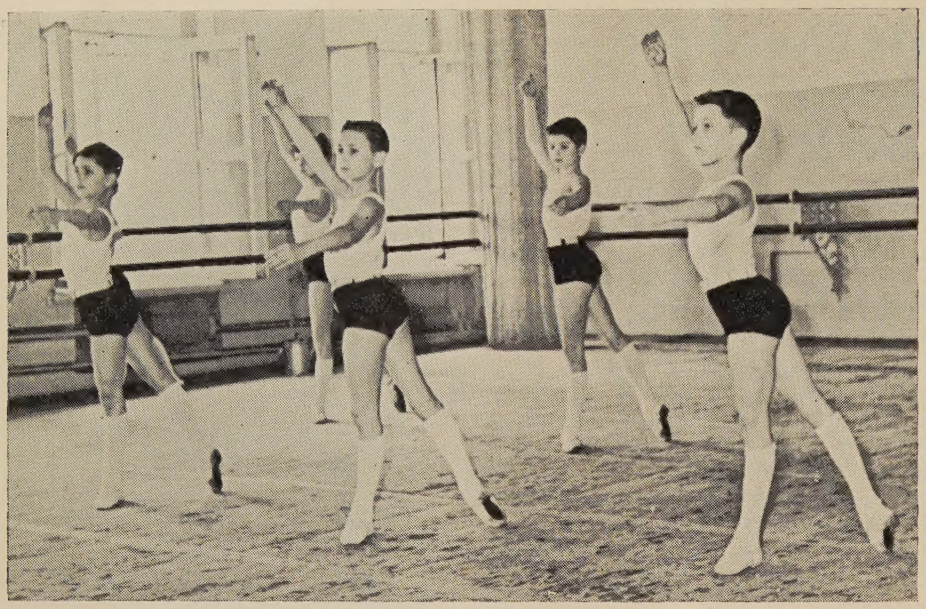
Gilpin as Napoleon

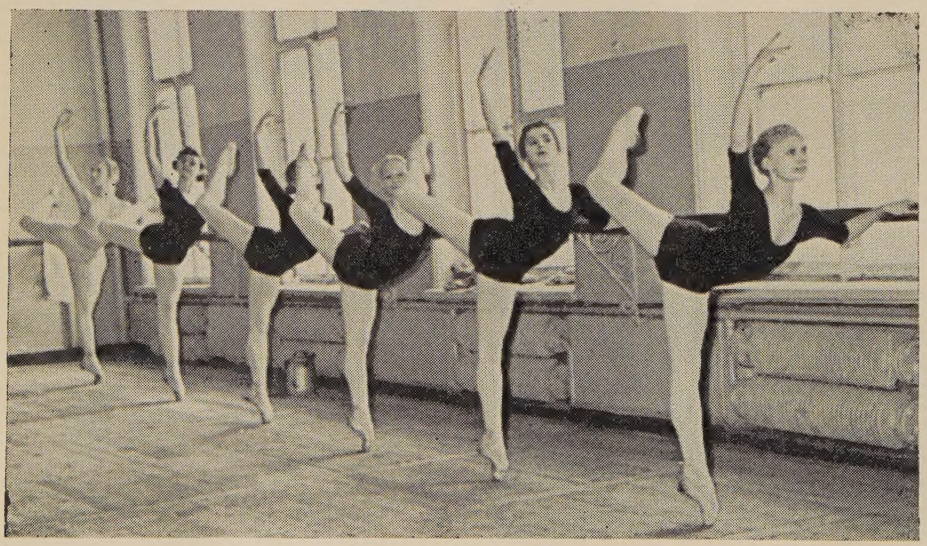
"HOW strange that France has to wait for the arrival of John Gilpin, an English dancer, to create the historical figure of Bonaparte" is what a French critic wrote after the first performance by Festival Ballet of Serge Lifar's new work when it was recently given in Nice at a festival to celebrate the centenary of the union of Nice with the French Republic. This work, with music by Maurice Thiriet and designs by André Levasseur, is the first creation shown in London during Festival Ballet's present season at Festival Hall.

Bonaparte à Nice is set in 1796 when Napoleon was only 27; also the same year that he married Josephine de Beauharnais. History relates that the then rising young general was ordered to Nice to take command of the army and re-discipline it before embarking on the Italian campaign. The story of the ballet concerns the amorous attachment of the young Napoleon (played by John Gilpin) to Angela (played by Marilyn Burr), daughter of Conte Laurenti, during this period in Nice. It is, of course, one of the many amorous episodes which punctuated the life of the young Corsican who rose to become one of France's greatest figures and whose very name struck terror into the hearts of the rest of Europe. The new ballet falls into three scenes opening and closing in the Place de la République in Nice and with its centre action taking place in the Conte's garden.

Photographed by Serge Lido

NAPOLEON AND ANGELA: Three pictures of the two principals in Bonaparte à Nice *— Gilpin in the title rôle and Burr as Angela.*





Russian

BY the winter of 1959-60 I had, like one of the more weepy characters in a Chekhov play, almost become convinced that I should never get to Moscow. Three years of prodding and suggesting seemed to be adding up to a waste of time and effort. Then suddenly the Soviet Ministry of Culture cautiously agreed that I could have facilities to see performances and also to visit ballet schools in Moscow and Leningrad and, further, to meet whoever I wished. This turned out, inevitably I suppose, to mean "whoever was available". But things worked out reasonably well; the country and the people showed some of every quality — efficiency and stupidity, warmth and suspicion, misery and grandeur, boredom and great excitements — in all places and among all kinds of people.

No foreigner can pretend to measure accurately the complications, achievements, absurdities and paradoxes he will meet in Russia on a first visit. What follows are my recollections of what most impressed me during sixteen packed days of seeing performances, watching classes and rehearsals, discussing with students, teachers, directors, critics a thousand questions relating to Russian ballet.

May 11. Moscow quite unlike the picture built up from all one's reading and talking about it; vast streets, avenues with (except in the centre) little traffic and few people. A city of muted tones — all soft yellows, greys and pinks; little beautiful architecture. Once the Sparrow Hills, where every character in Russian fiction walked to get air or ponder on his lost love or just to look at Moscow down below, are now the Lenin Hills with suburbs reaching around for miles; crowned with the most impressive and depressive of those "wedding-cake skyscrapers" that Stalin so approved — the new University. Taxi takes hours grinding round the suburbs to the Ukraine Hotel, Russia's biggest but badly sited (roughly, say, in Shepherd's Bush). Entrance hall rather looks and sounds like Waterloo Station; my room (one of 1,300) spacious, filled with vast and new furniture — bigness is a big idea with the Russians. Carefully hidden radio drones away until I find carefully hidden switch and so acquire silent radio. Sleep.

May 12. Intourist Bureau cleverly plans meal tickets, car service, theatre bookings, guide-interpreter service; but the cleverness soon shades off into fantastic inefficiency in some matters; learn to adjust after 48 hours; shrug it off (like a Russian) and learn quickly that time takes care of everything. Confusion with guide about my aims and objectives; persuade her that am not interested in building statistics and similar small-talk — ballet comes first. Helpful guidance from, and introductions by, cultural attaché at Embassy; am assured by man at Ministry of Culture that ballet

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SECOND TO SEVENTH YEAR STUDENTS:
Students of the Bolshoi School in Moscow:
Top left, boys doing centre work in their second year class.
Centre, third year girls at the barre.
Below left, seventh year girls doing attitudes *at the* barre.

Journey

by A. V. COTON

In May, 1960, The Daily Telegraph **sent its dance critic, A. V. Coton, to Russia to study Soviet ballet. In this and in the following article next month, he records his impressions about many aspects of ballet as well as interviews with teachers, dancers, critics and directors — both in Moscow and Leningrad.**

schools accessible; doors will be opened, staff briefed: I can see all, go anywhere.

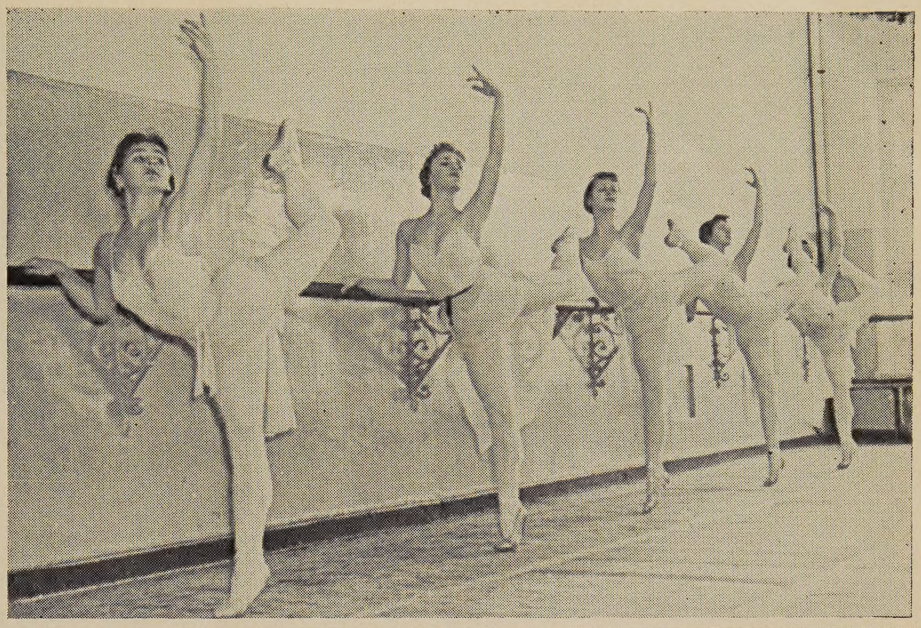
Evening: see first ballet performance in Russia. Stanislavsky Theatre roughly equivalent to Sadler's Wells here, showing my first full-length ballet not in Western repertoire, *Le Corsaire*. Why does this work survive? Programme suggests that choreography is the original of Mazilier; if so, then Petipa didn't come a moment too soon on the scene last century. It is similar in style to, say, *Bakhchisarai Fountain*, with elaborate story given in mime and acting with dances both classical and character interspersed with, rather than integrated to, the scenario. Conrad, the corsair, sharply characterised and danced and acted with clean vigour by Maris Liepa, the theatre's new popular "hero".

May 13. The Bolshoi Ballet School an amazing place, physically and otherwise. The five-storey building is over a century old and mostly looks it: shabby, untidy, with peeling paint and patched walls (but the dance rooms are clean and bright, the floors smooth and springy and the pianos excellent). A symbol of much in Russia today; an old and not really suitable building in use because no time to plan or build another. Since 1917 Authority has been promoting so many schemes (building estates, factories, hospitals, schools, etc., etc.) that old buildings still usable go on being used until, I suppose, they just fall down.

But this doesn't matter a bit when you see the work going on there. New director Madame Golovkina and her assistant, Mr. Yakhlin, give a warm welcome; they work out timetable of classes, teachers are introduced . . . and I watch my first class in Russia. Between classes I can ask questions, the director shows me round or gets a guide to do so; peer into history, arithmetic, etc., lessons; see living quarters of boarders, lunch in canteen.

The place has 340 students between 10 and 18 years old, 55 living in and the rest boarded with families all over Moscow. Including academic and musical staff there are 97 teachers, using ten ballet rooms, ten classrooms, twelve music rooms. Children come from all over Asia (and look it, too!) as well as all parts of Russia and Transcurtainia. Everywhere that every adult goes in the school, every child gives a greeting, plus a snappy half-curtsy — the beginning of discipline and also self-discipline?

No ballet this evening, so look at the



GRADUATION EXAMS: Ninth year Bolshoi students, at their passing-out examinations.

Top right, Attitudes *at the* barre.

Centre right, Centre-work with the promising new star, Ryabinkina, in the middle.

Below right, in double-work with the boys.

city. Just behind enormous new streets are alleys and courtways full of old-style wooden cottages, one storey and fifty years past their last painting — pure Dostoievsky or Gogol. Old grannies in black head-scarves sit round gossiping and nursing babies, children play in the dirt surface. You see that Moscow isn't really a city; there is a city-style hard core centred on a few big squares and buildings and all round dozens of little Asiatic towns and villages all pushing and pressing together. Parks with grass, a few trees but rarely any flowers; all benches packed, everybody chattering — true privacy probably the rarest commodity anywhere in the country.

May 14. First classical class at 9 a.m. sharp; it happens for two "academic hours" (i.e., 90 minutes) daily for everybody. Three classes in three rooms at once, other students busy with maths., history or folk-dance, historical dance, dramatic acting, mime, or partnering. This possible only with excellent staffwork and rigid timetable. Each class's monitor allots weekly duty of floor-watering; children fill cans, carry into rooms, and spray floor about five times a lesson. Rosin rare, usually inside heels of shoes — also plenty of water *inside* shoes (query: do they ever get head-colds?). Pianist and teacher in room five minutes before zero-hour, then door firmly bolted. No interruptions and a late child probably is sent away and misses a lesson, quite a tough punishment by the looks on their faces.

Men and women teachers vary as much as with us; some scarcely speak, others run a class on a non-stop monologue; some explain and explain again but don't show anything: others dash around pulling arms and legs, prodding bottoms, lifting heads, poking ribs. But all done with concentration and ceaseless advice; there may be excitement but never exasperation. There is no screaming, no bullying. Teachers care deeply about every child — and there are never more than ten in a class, often seven or eight.

Some hours later I realise that I have taken in the most important discovery that I am likely to make: that there is *no* secret about Russian ballet training. Those wonderful backs, columnar necks, flower-like hands and arms, those enormous *developées,* deep *arabesques,* etc., etc., etc., come out of gradual, continuous and absolutely regular training. Steps, placement, the power to attack and project, the technical completeness that we see on stage — all this is learned, but smoothly, logically, with everything explained to the child as it goes on.

The reasons why it works seem as follows :

1. Beginning at the right age (very few begin learning after the age of eleven) and going on with firm regularity of timetable.
2. A balanced schedule which is never slowed down or speeded up; ninety minutes' classical daily, six days a week, over ten months a year . . . just going on and on and on and on.
3. The child early learns the necessity of discipline and of self-discipline (but this probably works in the whole Russian educational system) and sucks in with his dance lessons the notion that this is worth making into a life's work.
4. Full absorption of the teachers in their work; a skilled job that never palls because each new class presents fresh ways of getting over the basic problems (i.e., children are individuals). Teachers help students towards perfection as dance technicians and also into their status as artists and as personalities.

So it goes on day after day; and so day after day I take part; arriving in time for a class beginning, watching everything that everybody does, eating in the canteen, between classes asking questions, getting statistics, discussing the history of ballet in the Archives Department with its curator, Mr. Bakhroushin. This daily routine goes on until I leave for Leningrad, with, as contrast to watching classes, performances at the Stanislavsky and the Bolshoi. May 14, 15 and 16.

A 3-ballet show at the Stanislavsky, all in Bourmeister choreography; *Schéhérazade* (usual music) is an exercise in staging and acting rather than a danced ballet. Its story is of shipwrecked Sinbad and his pursuit of an Eastern princess, ending with another shipwreck: superb effects of sea storms, rising moons and suns, enormous ships slowly disappearing, etc. *Shore of Happiness,* a modern tale of three sailors in love with the same girl, all four in action against the invaders and the loved lad gets killed, lots of machine-gun fire, and a blazing tank, on stage at various times (what price *The Sleeping Beauty* or *La Fille Mal Gardée*?). Finally, *Straussiana,* a good and happily *danced* copy of that basic ballet that Massine made called *Le Beau Danube.*

Watch first-year boys ending *barre* exercise with exactly two minutes *in point-shoes* (probably a special notion of this teacher? to specially exercise Achilles tendon?). Matinée Sunday (12 noon) at the Bolshoi is *Giselle*; stupendous house all in white, gold, rose and crimson. Vast stage holds same production we saw at Covent Garden, but not so vast that it blurs any of the mime or the clarity and speed of the dancing. Struchkova absolutely sublime in the rôle — exactly as Ulanova does, but with subtle differences of accent and tempo she comes on and persuades you that this *is* Giselle living and dying her pathetic destiny for the first time ever. Ekaterina Maximova, one of the new teenage sensations, in the Peasant *pas de deux,* has great brilliance of style, essentially a happy and lovely girl who moves like a wondrous bird; has the most appealing and innocent smile I've ever seen on a dancer in performance.

May 16. Watch two classes and have talk with Mr. Bakhroushin about tangled but fantastic history of rivalry between Moscow and Petersburg Ballets last century; leave in time to dash to airport for 2.15 plane to Leningrad (it's cheaper than by rail and a little faster). Told plane delayed until 3 p.m.; at 3.30, told will take off at 4. We leave at 4.20 and fly the 460 miles in 65 minutes flat, but delays at airport and reach centre and my hotel at 7.15, just too late to get into any theatre that night.

May 17. Leningrad differs from Moscow as, say, Paris does from Berlin — or, a nearer comparison, as Edinburgh does from Leeds. The ballet school, one time home of Pavlova, Karsavina, Danilova,

GRADUATION CLASS : Two more pictures of the Bolshoi School 9th year graduation demonstration class with the girls in the right-hand picture doing arabesques.

Balanchine, Ulanova, etc., is a bit bigger, a bit older and a bit more stuck-up than the Moscow one. When you explore it, you don't blame the Leningraders; it's the old building in the "Theatre Street" of Karsavina's memoirs (now it is called "Rossi Street" after its architect). Let me jump right in at the deep end and say that where Moscow (school and companies) produces and shows powerful and dramatic dancing and splendid mime, Leningrad turns out a more aesthetically pleasing style of dancer; life seems more calm, more European, perhaps more nostalgic — but this may be only the impression a foreigner gets who goes there with his memory stuffed with passages from Russian novels, poems, memoirs, history.

All the floors in the classrooms in the Vaganova School are raked exactly to the proportions of the theatre stages, which helps until the dancers come to Covent Garden or the New York Met. There is even a different look about the students; the same quiet good manners as elsewhere, but more blondes, and one notices more of that pallor of the face that so many Russian blonde women have. But it's largely a sunless climate, and very damp, and the whole nation has been on a fairly limited diet for years; which is maybe as good an explanation as any other.

The Vaganova method is taught in both cities, but one suspects that Moscow teachers experiment more with it than do the Leningraders. Enter the Kirov, one-time Maryinsky Theatre, on whose stage were brought to birth *Swan Lake, The Sleeping Beauty,* etc., and where danced Karsavina, Preobrajenska, Trefilova, Pavlova and Nijinsky. See *Path of Thunder,* a long, long ballet based on a South African's novel about That Problem; in it a Negro graduate dances and acts and flirts wearing gown and mortar-board; primitive "Zulus" do a war dance that would disgrace a team of Morris Dance amateurs here; a villain (in leather shorts) flogs various Negroes, another one shoots dead another black boy . . . so it went on, a screaming parody of even the bad things that happen between black and white in South Africa. Get from this the full impact of what it means to have the arts under government censorship and control; yet it is so distorted that some of its audience sees through it . . . yes? no? Next day a Russian acquaintance says, "Did you find it interesting?" I said Yes! and why not and how much did he think he actually knew of black-and-white relationships in any country; and finally we were arguing about the entire question of whether any good can come out of arts where Authority says what the artist may, or may not, discuss.

Thinking over this audience, and some Moscow audiences with whom I had managed some talk, I decided that all wasn't as awful as it might seem. The regulars are "fans" — as crazy and partisan and noisy as we have them; they are teachers, nurses, taxi-drivers, waiters, chemists, civil servants, and so on. They yell and scream for "their" ballerina, and their interest is, first and foremost, in the performer. They go just as crazy over the old-fashioned 19th-century ballets as over the newer ones; and possibly the moral of the story makes about as much impression as does the "moral" of a pantomime over here.

May 18, 19, 20 and 21. The ballet school is lighter, and more airy than in Moscow; it may make the dancing look more effortless or perhaps the students really do have a lighter and happier feeling than "down there"? Certainly, it fascinates in a way different from the Bolshoi School; the staff is just as mixed (as regards ages, dance experience) as the staff in Moscow. The work looks a little less intense throughout the classes; which may be the effect of teaching "pure Vaganova", but I am not expert enough to know for certain. There is no suggestion of rivalry or mockery with the other city; in any talk, it is all about the styles of dancing, the interesting differences of production, the exchange of ballets between the repertoires. Some of this may have been carefully prepared — but so delicately that it didn't suggest even the faintest air of deceit — for the stranger visitor; yet there is a strong current of feeling — always has been — between the two cities. Leningraders are proud of their strong cultural heritage; nearly all the great writers lived and worked there; their ballet school is the oldest (222 this year); the city is stuffed with beautiful buildings put up in the classical style by 18th and 19th-century Italian architects. Many of them look weary, lacking paint, with woodwork decaying and plaster falling off; all are now museums or assembly halls or little theatres and concert-rooms.

A TEACHER INSPECTS: Madame Vassilieva, wife of previous teacher and choreographer Goleizovsky, inspects the costumes of the 9th year graduates. Vassilieva is one of the many teachers in the Bolshoi School.

At the Maly Theatre a programme of "miniatures" (i.e., our kind of short ballets) all on Ravel music. More and more one finds how much all thinking (and feeling, too) is geared to the music in ballet. This sense of the composer being the most valuable partner goes back a long way in Russian ballet history; it largely explains a great deal about the way that Russian choreographers have been trained to create ballets, and it tells a good deal about how and why the student gets so much out of his dance training (it always includes music theory as a study, and practical piano lessons). The Ravel pieces are *Daphnis and Chloë, La Valse* and *Bolero,* with choreography by Davitashvili; the first uses the Fokine scenario and looks rather like what Fokine might have done if he had been making a parody of the sort of ballet he was fighting against. The two others were, shall we say, very poor relations of the similar ballets we know from the hands of Frederick Ashton and Sigurd Leeder.

Raymonda at the Kirov makes some amends for *Path of Thunder*; it is a story as silly as that of any opera, about Knights and Saracens embroiled in passions over a lovely lady. The style effortlessly mingles supposed period dances (French, approx. 15th-century) with Eastern (genre *Chu Chin Chow*) and 19th-century classicism in tutus and on points. But its heroine, Zubkovskaya, absolutely scintillates in the rôle; she has great elegance, superb line, and a speed and finesse that exactly fit the late Petipa inventions.

Prince Igor, in the best production I could ever hope to see, still has the Fokine choreography, and the dancing is as thrilling as the singing and the staging; it is curiously "period-Fokine", looking, I dare swear, exactly as he staged it the first time it was ever danced. Less violent than our versions, it suggests a half-savage band of warriors who never reveal their full degree of brutality and cunning. One wonders, not for the first (or last) time why, with this sort of example, the modern choreographers don't manage to achieve a little dance-filled and drama-packed choreography in their new ballets.

Leningrad becomes more disturbing every day there; it has a fascination beyond that of Moscow; its ballet and the ballet school impress with hundreds of subtle differences from the other place. To weigh these differences, to think over these ballets, to digest the history lessons that I learned in the Archives and Museum Department — I must look again at what goes on in Moscow. If at first I regret that my stay here is so short, I know that a longer visit would prejudice anyone hopelessly against the values of any other place in Russia.

The sun has shone all the time here; but it turns cold as I leave the Vaganova School after saying farewells, and for a few minutes snow falls as I get my last look at the Nevsky Prospect from a car window, on the way back to the airport for a plane to Moscow. **End of Part 1.**

CHOPINIANA : *Mona Vangsaa and Erik Bruhn in the version of* Les Sylphides *which Fokine himself revived for Copenhagen. The original title was retained so that there should be no confusion with the Bournonville* La Sylphide *in the Royal Danish Ballet's repertory.*

The New Face of Copenhagen

by GENE PALATSKY

During the 1960 Royal Danish Ballet Festival in Copenhagen, an American critic found that the dance style there was undergoing modernisation. Here are his conclusions in addition to his opinion of the revivals and the works new to the repertory.

THE dance style of the Royal Danish ballet is undergoing modernisation. Several observers in Copenhagen during the ballet festival in May lamented that the Danes were losing their trademark — that the century-old Bournonville style was being methodically eliminated. During the third act of *Napoli,* these mourners shook their heads at the vigour and elegance of a Volkova-trained starlet like Solveig Ostergaard, and preferred instead the soaring, gentle lyricism of veteran Kirsten Ralov, a true Bournonville dancer.

Actually, the French classical style which August Bournonville instilled in the Danes while he was ballet director from 1830 to 1877 is still the basic ingredient in their stage manner. The festival offered the old master's *La Sylphide,* the *Napoli divertissements* and a *pas de deux* from the *Floral Fête at Genzano* ; and they were superbly danced — in the right style.

The Bournonville classroom training, plus performances of his ballets, will keep intact the company's Bournonville tradition. Vera Volkova's Russian principles are merely bringing the Danes up to date, equipping them to dance a 20th-century repertoire. A dance style which is modern, but specifically Danish, is emerging from this mixture of influences. With its 212-year-old heritage, this company remains unique — these are Danish bodies and Danish temperaments, despite the teacher's nationality — but the museum look is gone.

There is nothing like a Balanchine ballet to reveal a company's true nature. (And comparisons with the New York City Ballet were inevitable.) The plotless *Serenade* was beautifully danced in Copenhagen, with warm lyricism substituted for the slightly crisper mood of a New York performance. Dramatically balanced in *Serenade* were the delicate neatness of Mona Vangsaa, the blonde sparkle of Inge Sand and the dark-toned smoothness of Ruth Andersen.

The Danes capture the cold but romantic atmosphere of Balanchine's *Night Shadow* far more successfully than the New York dancers, who were introduced to the 14 year-old ballet just this past season, and are still relatively unfamiliar with the work. Erik Bruhn enhanced the stagings of both companies — perhaps unsurpassable as the Poet who strives to wake love and beauty from its sleep-walking state, and is murdered for his efforts. Mona Vangsaa and Mette Mollerup were both alluring as the hardened Coquette. Margrethe Schanne was a bit unsteady, and therefore not so ethereal, as the Sleepwalker. An excellent contribution was the torch-lit, almost-haunted patio scene by André Delfau.

In the Balanchine classic, *Apollon Musagetes,* the Danish soloists lacked the technical polish of a D'Amboise-Kent-Hayden-Wilde performance ; but Henning Kronstam, as Apollo, and Mette Mollerup, Hanne Marie Ravn and Kirsten Petersen, as the Muses, moved deftly through the intricate groupings and provided some stirring Grecian poses. Kronstam builds his rôle so intelligently, from the awkward, humble adolescent into the heroic figure who climbs to Olympus.

Another New York favourite, Jerome Robbins' *Fanfare,* was enlivened by expressive faces and a sense of fun at the Royal Theatre. Yet, for this "guide to the orchestra" one missed the clean lines and direct musicality of the New York City Ballet. The Danes are passing up a good opportunity by casting "solodancers" (Denmark's top ranking) in *Fanfare,* for the brief solos would serve as valuable training flights for youngsters in the company.

The disappointment of the festival was the deterioration of Frederick Ashton's *Romeo and Juliet.* As this was the opening night ballet, the Danes really looked in trouble. Flemming Flindt and Kirsten Petersen, as the star-cross'd duo, were saved by Ashton's glorious choreography in the balcony and bedroom scenes, but they lacked all subtlety in their dramatic interpretations. The characterizations of Tybalt and Mercutio were not sufficiently differentiated to explain their natural antagonism and motivate their final duel. The *corps de ballet* appeared lifeless, uninterested in the Capulets' ball and in street scenes. Dramatic continuity was completely gone. This wonderful ballet deserves a complete overhauling by the Danes, especially before it goes to America in the fall. Ashton was visiting in Copenhagen during the festival, and it is hoped that he made a few pointed remarks along these lines.

Birgit Cullberg, who was also a visitor, should have no complaints about the

presentation of her works. The reddish-haired Kirsten Petersen, the night after her uninspired Juliet, was more favourably cast in this Strindberg rôle, as the imperious, seductive and pitiable heroine of *Miss Julie*, Mona Vangsaa, on an off-night, never became more than a nasty, spoiled rich girl in this part. Miss Julie's servile, yet dignified, Butler won passionate portrayals from Erik Bruhn, Frank Schaufuss and Henning Kronstam. Mona Kiil mimed cleverly through the small part of Christine, the Butler's haughty and adoring fiancée.

In Miss Cullberg's *The Moon Reindeer*, both Mona Vangsaa and Hanne Marie Ravn were elegant and exciting as the unloved young girl who is transformed into a White Reindeer, with power of love and death over men. In this ballet, which is based on a Lapp legend, Miss Cullberg's dynamics are co-ordinated with the fine score of Knudager Riisager — northern romanticism in music — and the imaginative décor of Per Falk — a bare stage, with colour masses and designs projected on the back-drop to represent the Nordic skies. (About 2 a.m., the sky over the bay in Stockholm actually looks like this fantastic décor.)

This company knows how to dance *Les Sylphides* (entitled *Chopiniana* in Copenhagen). Despite some unevenness in the *corps de ballet*, Fokine's particular romantic movements for this masterpiece were comfortably at home on the Royal Theatre stage. Schanne's *Prelude* was slightly overdone, but Ralov bounded appealingly through her *Mazurka*, and Bruhn and Vangsaa provided the finest dancing of the entire festival, separately in their variations and together in their matchless *pas de deux*. The Bournonville style is undoubtedly not what Fokine intended for *Les Sylphides*, but it's not bad as a background.

Two "Spanish" ballets were added to the

MISS JULIE *(above): Mona Kiil, Henning Kronstam and Kirsten Petersen in Cullberg's ballet based on Strinberg.*

CARMEN *(below): Two scenes from the ballet which Roland Petit revived for the Royal Danish Ballet. Left, Kirsten Petersen, in the title rôle, with Flemming Flindt, as Don José, in the famous bedroom scene. Right, Three Bandits in the Lillas Pastia scene — Fredbjorn Bjornsson, Niels Kehlet and Inge Sand.*

APOLLON MUSAGETES: *A rehearsal picture of Balanchine's work to Stravinsky music with Mette Mollerup, Henning Kronstam and Kirsten Petersen.*

Danish repertoire this past season, with varying success. *Carmen,* Roland Petit's spectacular spoofing of the Bizet opera, offers the Danes a chance to demonstrate their gifts for mime. Kirsten Petersen dazzled both the audience and Don José with her desiring, desirable Carmen, especially in the *seguidilla.* Flemming Flindt had his best evening as the hapless soldier, dancing brilliantly and acting convincingly. Inge Sand, Fredbjorn Bjornsson and Niels Kehlet were a clowning, devilish trio of bandits, and the whole company joined in some hilarious sequences at the Lillas Pastia cabaret — amid the famous Clavé décor.

Of all the British ballets available, the Danes, for some reason, bought *Blood Wedding.* Kirsten Petersen, Frank Schaufuss, Henning Kronstam and Lillian Jensen made the most of these pseudo-Spanish histrionics, but the odds were against them.

The *ensemble* frolicked expertly through David Lichine's unpretentious *Graduation Ball,* which showed off the artistry of youngsters like Solveig Ostergaard and Niels Kehlet. The senior dancers (40-plus), who are invaluable as mimes, skipped youthfully through the comic *Whims of Cupid,* choreographed by Vincenzo Galeotti in 1786 and claimed to be the oldest survivor in the world repertoire. (These mature dancers — Niels Bjorn Larsen, Lillian Jensen, Svend Erik Jensen, Ole Palle Hansen, and others — are vital members of the Royal Danish Ballet. With these artists on the roster, the company doesn't have to pad out young dancers and teach them aged movements for Dr. Coppélius, Lord and Lady Capulet, Madge in *La Sylphide* and the various old characters in *Petrushka.)*

The Bournonville classics are still fresh. Margrethe Schanne, on the evenings that she steps through air in *La Sylphide,* comes the closest to being *prima ballerina* of this company. Fredbjorn Bjornsson and Ole Fatum were brilliant in their Highland dances. The *corps* of sylphides glided softly through the forest and, at the death of their leader, demonstrated horror and grief in a scene which could well serve as a model for group acting — for the *Giselle* mad scene, as an example. The *Napoli* variations seemed as much fun for the dancers as for the cheering spectators. The *pas de deux* from *The Floral Fête at Genzano* is an endearing museum piece danced by the Bournonville specialists, Bjornsson and Kirsten Ralov.

Three modern Danish ballets — all inflicted on the repertoire this past season — exposed a serious gap in the company's artistic picture. Erik Bruhn's *Festa* is a high-spirited *pas de dix* which reflects the holiday mood of the streamlined Rossini music, but with little originality. *Peter and the Wolf,* by Niels Bjorn Larsen, with the young dancers miming happily and harmlessly through the Prokofiev *leitmotivs,* is a good show, better suited for the Tivoli pantomime stage. Kirsten Ralov's lengthy *La Dame aux Camelias,* aiming high with its abstract settings by Henrik Bloch and impressionist score by Jens Bjerre, dwells on the dramatic highlights of the Dumas romance and results in no more than a superficial, sketchy interpretation. Bruhn, Larsen and Ralov, as creators, have not yet matched their lofty achievements as performers.

The ballet, opera and drama companies have two theatres at their disposal in Copenhagen and, as Vera Volkova has suggested, one of them could be used periodically as a ballet workshop, where young Danish choreographers could work out their ideas. The festival organizers devoted themselves to exhibiting Danish musicians, dancers, conductors and composers; but they were willing to open the festival with the work of an Englishman (Ashton's *Romeo)* and close with the work of an American (Robbins' *Fanfare)* — emphasizing the sore need for native choreographers in Denmark.

The Royal Theatre orchestra, under Johan Hye-Knudsen, was a rich-sounding, staunch ally to the stage action during the festival. But there was some lack of *rapport* between the orchestra and a guest

American conductor, Robert Zeller, which particularly damaged the Prokofiev score for *Romeo and Juliet.*

The Danes continue to be a major ballet company without a major ballerina. Kirsten Petersen, however, combines personal beauty, a dramatic awareness and technical versatility to range successfully from Cullberg to *Carmen.* Mette Mollerup may be the number one Balanchine soloist, forthright and unfussy in her movements. Ruth Andersen, with gentle flowing arms, reminds the New York visitor of Jillana's earthy lyricism. (Kirsten Simone, of the young solodancers, was on the injured list during the festival.) Vangsaa, Schanne, Sand and Ralov are a lovely quartet, still setting the standard for the company's younger dancers.

Among the men at the Royal Theatre, or at any ballet theatre in the world, Erik Bruhn is incomparable. He reigns in Copenhagen as Fonteyn does in London. Henning Kronstam, while gaining assurance and virtuosity, has lost some nobility on stage and may be heading for *demi-caractère* rôles. Flemming Flindt, a brilliant dancer, must learn the value of restraint in dramatics. Only in the melodramas, *Carmen* and *Blood Wedding,* was his over-acting acceptable.

The company's future should revolve around the growing young talents of Hanne Marie Ravn, Solveig Ostergaard and Niels Kehlet, who are ready now for any assignment.

But the future in Copenhagen will depend more on sound artistic direction, and, at present, no single strong man is responsible for that function. This is occasionally noticeable — in the drastic condition of *Romeo and Juliet,* in the disorganized postures of the children lining the bridge in *Napoli,* in some definite miscasting of soloists. The Royal Danes have flourished through history when a central figure — Galeotti, Bournonville, Hans Beck, Lander — stood in command.

Away from the Royal Theatre, the festival presented another dance form in an open-air setting, with a visiting folk dance group from the Farce Islands. These untheatrical people, who live a hard life on their icy home islands, seemed strangely warm and peaceful as they moved arm-in-arm through simple chain dances, singing melodies based on Nordic mythology. An unexpected performer was included in their programme when the Danish Prime Minister, Viggo Kampmann, joined one chain dance.

Both the Prime Minister and the president of the Copenhagen municipal council gave short talks at the city hall, opening a ballet exhibition there to run concurrently with the festival. Allan Fridericia, the Danish scene designer, dance historian and critic, arranged the interesting exhibition, which included photos, rare prints, costumes, sculpture and a fascinating replica of the stage equipment which carries the ballerina heavenward in *La Sylphide.*

The Royal Family attended both the opening and closing ballet performances at the Royal Theatre. Even trams carried festival posters. And a popular coffee house, in its front window, advertised tempting chocolate tarts as "Margrethe Schanne Cakes".

ANIMAL BALLETS: Left, a scene from the new version of Prokofiev's Peter and the Wolf. *Right, Verner Andersen and Hanne Marie Ravn in Cullberg's* The Moon Reindeer.

GUESTS AT THE CHRISTENING (above): The six fairies with their attendants at the christening of the baby Princess Aurora in the prologue.

SIXTEENTH BIRTHDAY (below): Nadia Nerina as Princess Aurora at her birthday party, when she has to choose a husband, in the "Spell" scene, Act 1.

Photos: Houston Rogers.

The 'Beauty' Returns

On June 10, 1960, The Royal Ballet presented a re-furbished presentation of the Tchaikovsky/Petipa The Sleeping Beauty **at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.**

DECOR

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY, or rather the *Sleeping Princess* as it was then called because Diaghilev did not want it confused with an English Christmas pantomime, was my first love in ballet. As things are going now, and in spite of many Carabosse-like attempts to make me feel otherwise, it is also likely to be my last. Musically and choreographically it is the classical ballet masterpiece of all time.

For the Diaghilev 1921 revival, Leon Bakst designed with a magnificence that evoked the splendours of Court ballets in the 17th and 18th centuries. Unfortunately the public of the 'twenties, in their mad search for new horizons and titillating sensations, was unprepared for a classical revival on such a scale. It was not until 1939 that the Vic-Wells ballet made a brave but extremely tentative attempt at awakening the Princess in some very pedestrian designs by Nadia Benois, who, being the niece of Alexandre Benois, one felt should have known better. The second attempt by the Wells at kissing the Princess awake in 1946 not only awakened her good and proper but also marked the dawn of a new era in the life of London's funny old opera house placed so incongruously in the midst of a vegetable market; since then the Covent Garden Opera House has moved from strength to strength and the production of *The Sleeping Beauty*, together with its star Princess Aurora, Margot Fonteyn, have been the prime factors in making "The Sadler Wells" or "Saddlers" (now the Royal Ballet) an international ballet force. For this second English awakening, Oliver Messel created costumes and settings which, to a world starved for six years of anything even remotely akin to lavish spectacle, seemed like a sort of dream. And it is vitally important when considering that particular revival to understand the mental condition of the whole world — understandably and naturally we lapped it all up in much the same way that people guzzled extra points on their sweet ration. We had got it and who were we to be critical of the quality of the goods offered. That was 338 performances ago at Covent Garden alone — not taking into consideration the other hundreds of performances of the work given by the Royal Ballet in other countries — and with fading austerity and sharpened critical faculties there has been time for second thoughts about some of the designing. Alas, no waves of self-criticism appear to have engulfed Oliver Messel, or if they have his self-satisfaction has been so strong that the waves have only sloshed mildly around his ankles, for the so-called and long-promised "new" production which burst upon Covent Garden on June 10, 1960, shows no basic change and apart from one or two minor exceptions those that have been made are all for the worse.

It was Diaghilev who said of *Schéhérazade* that if it were to be revived in later years the colours would have to be twice as bright. And it would seem that Messel had something like this in mind when he embarked on his half-hearted re-thinking of the present designs for the "Beauty". Unfortunately Diaghilev was referring to Bakst, whose sense of colour — its balance and dramatic value — has known no equal

in the theatre. It would have been quite easy to heighten all his colours because their whole conception from the start was absolutely right, and provided all the colours were heightened with equal intensity no harm would be done. Messel has not the same genius for mass effect or for striking a balance and it appears that he sees his costumes as individuals, and very charming individuals some of them are, but bearing little relation to their surroundings or their juxtaposition to other costumes; the ultimate effect is as pungent as a badly planned herbaceous border.

Following Bakst's example, Messel has gone to the Bibiena family for inspiration in his settings — and no source could be more apt — but this family was steeped in architecture, and Messel's idea of architecture and perspective appears to be hazy, to say the least. In his original settings, which were rather misty, this fault was not so obvious; with the new, more clearly defined sets, it becomes glaring. Many of the wings are muddled in idea and frequently bear little relation to the backcloths. All this apart, his treatment of the rocky exterior in the "Vision" scene is flabby and shows no understanding of rock formations, and why does the moon shine so wanly throughout this act? Are they hunting at night or something, and if so, why doesn't the hunt have some form of illumination such as torches or lanterns? Another irritating feature of both the Prologue and Act I is a series of fountains with painted water cascading from them — they are badly painted and make both settings look as though they have suffered some unfortunate accident. The Lilac Fairy's boat still has drip-dry laundry hanging about it which is now accentuated by being surmounted by a gargantuan garland of magnolias. On the credit side, this same boat now puts to sea for the "Panorama" music at the beginning of Act 3, and the effect is delightful — or would be if the boat's progress were more convincing and less jerky. The entrance of the Lilac Fairy and Prince Florimund into the castle of the sleeping Princess Aurora is also vastly improved. The two gauzes — one showing the distant castle engulfed in century-old shrubbery, the other showing a terrace — lead us gradually into the palace which in spite of the aforementioned faults makes an imposing background for the final wedding celebrations.

Now to the costumes of the characters that appear in these settings. Messel has seen the court of King Florestan XXIV as mainly Spanish, *circa* Philip IV — more the birth and birthday of an Infanta than anything else. The moment the curtain rises we are greeted by some new costumes for male courtiers in this Diego Velázquez period — and their ruffs are as high as our hopes for an improved production, but then on the other side of the stage their female counterparts are just as they always were only the materials are richer and the colours brighter — one group of ladies are in such a violent crimson that they completely kill everything else in the scene. The entrance of King Florestan and his spouse — an unimposing entrance down some steps along a terrace and turning a corner up some more steps to stage level — bring on the same old costumes only refurbished. His with its cape that gives him the air of a hunchback, hers like a pink and white Victorian dressing-table overloaded with 10 cent store "costume" jewellery.

With the entrance of the fairies, their cavaliers and entourage come added horrors. I find it distressing that after fourteen years of this particular production, six male dancers should be subjected to the humiliation of having to wear the confections imposed on the fairy's cavaliers. They all look unhappy and self-conscious in their flowered toques, like people who have arrived at a garden party in the wrong clothes. I just cannot believe that such costumes do the cause of trying to establish the virility of male dancing any good at all. The fairies they partner are individually charming—like Fabergé Easter eggs offered to a puking Infanta — all a-glitter and a-jibber are they with bits of decoration. When they dance their *soli* matters are not too bad; when collected together their plethora of different patterns and colours create no impression whatsoever. In fact the greatest "fairy" impression comes from a group of Maids of Honour in a deep lilac.

Even in the old production the costume for Carabosse was one of the most satisfactory in this whole scene. She used, as far as I can remember, to wear black weeds covered with writhing gold snakes, now the snakes have been replaced by what look like red eyes — and a very poor replacement.

The changes in the "Spell" scene are few apart from Princess Aurora's friends who are now in ice blue and create an admirable background for Aurora and a cool oasis in so much fuss. All of which goes to prove that had Messel concentrated more on simplicity and mass effects the Court of King Florestan would have been the dignified place that imagination gives to such environments in fairy tales. Other-

ROSE ADAGIO: Svetlana Beriosova as Princess Aurora in the adagio *with her four suitors.* *Photo: Houston Rogers.*

BLUEBIRDS BEFORE ROYALTY : Annette Page and Brian Shaw in the "Bluebird" pas de deux *watched by King Florestan (Derek Rencher) and his Queen (Gerd Larsen), in the last act.* *Photo : Houston Rogers.*

wise the costumes here are much the same except that they are over-coloured, over-elaborate and vulgar. Aurora's four Princely suitors are so grotesque that any Princess would be justified at bursting into giggles — a lapse not unknown in Royal circles. Aurora herself has been smartened up with a crimson underskirt giving her an unnecesary air of sophistication. The long semi-full sleeves of her dress are just wrong and seriously muzz-up her *port de bras.*

For some time now, I have written about the wrong choice of material for the clothes of Marchionesses and Marquesses in the following hunting scene — they moved too quickly. Now the material is heavier and their movement is right, but their colours — some in a pale lemon — are hardly suitable for the chase. Wildly impracticable and far too visible when pursuing their quarry. A niggling point perhaps but how much more authenticity would have been achieved with more rich and sombre colours. The Nymphs who materialise to surround the "vision" of Aurora are the same lot of duckweed fairies dripping with greenery over pale green "sylphide" dresses which somehow make them look the widest collection of nymphs since the days of Rubens.

The saving grace of this scene comes with the costumes for the two principals — Prince Florimund in a magnificent coat of hunting "pink" and Aurora's vision in an icicled tutu. Compared to these two the rest sink into merciful oblivion.

Again, as in the Prologue, it is the Courtiers who have by far the best costumes at the wedding in the last act — the male costumes in maroon are very splendid. The fairy tale characters have a new addition in Bluebeard and two wives, and all three look like fugitives from an *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* pantomime. The three Ivans have also been spruced-up with blue hair and red costumes of remarkable ugliness. Yes, I know they are supposed to be grooms, but that seems no reason why they should be so completely alien to everything else.

It is very sad having to criticise adversely the work of someone whose designing for other branches of the theatre I have admired enormously over quite a number of years — in fact since Cochran's revue, *Wake Up and Dream,* in the late 'twenties. But, apart from the splendour which Messel brought to Lichine's *Francesca da Rimini,* his designing for ballet has been less successful. This may be due partly to the fact that he makes little allowance for the fact that his costumes have to be subjected to all kinds of violent movement and partly because his sense of decoration and colour hardly lends itself to the large theatres and stages where a company such as the Royal Ballet is bound to play. It is possibly significant that he has always been his happiest when using no colour at all — the white bedroom in *Helen* and the white "Heaven" scene from *Cochran's 1930 Revue* and, in the present instance, with Aurora's friends in Act 1. It is also strange that, after fourteen years, he cannot be self-critical enough to make changes in the designing which should have been basic rather than merely an elaboration of external decoration and a harshening of colour.

Yet the question arises, is this tragedy (because tragedy it certainly is) entirely the fault of Messel, or should some hand of artistic direction have taken a firmer and more guiding line? Is the present production geared more for American and Soviet consumption rather than for European? These question marks worm their way in and out of my mind and I am afraid that whatever the answer, justice has been done neither to a great ballet masterpiece nor to any expression of good taste.

Peter Williams.

PRODUCTION AND CHOREOGRAPHY

FOR two years or more there had been rumours, and rumours of rumours that the Royal Ballet was to produce a new production of *The Sleeping Beauty.* Some said it was to be revised by Frederick Ashton, some were less specific, but all agreed that *The Sleeping Beauty* was to be given a new look. In the event very little has been changed — except for the costumes — and, to my mind, the decision to leave the *status quo* largely undisturbed is an interesting mixture of dull wisdom and unadventurous folly.

Of all the Maryinsky classics in the Royal Ballet repertory, its version of *The Sleeping Beauty* is beyond dispute the best, and has been ever since the historic production which opened the company's tenure of the Royal Opera House in 1946. On the other hand it was very far from perfect — the score, for example, is anything but complete — and quite a number of improvements could have been made, not least in the general level of acting. Unquestionably, I think, the compromise the Royal Ballet has made by largely re-staging the existing production is disappointing. However, a number of small improvements have been made — where the production has been changed, the changes are almost all for the better — and the total disaster which could have attended a wholesale amendment of what was in the first place generally satisfactory, has been avoided.

Some of the changes are very small indeed. That curiously garbed hunting party, for example, who for hundreds and hundreds of performances have watched impassively while the boar has been sighted to their right, and then stolidly marched off to their left, now, at long last, show a superb sense of dramatic fitness by actually following their quarry. This revolutionary and sensible piece of pure theatre advocated in these columns for some ten years, and presaged by a similar change in the touring company's production, is nonetheless welcome for being a trifle overdue.

The famous "Panorama" or its music is still not included, but the production now makes some kind of compromise with tradition by introducing a stylised sea-journey undertaken by the Lilac Fairy and the Prince at the beginning of the altogether improved final transformation scene.

The biggest change concerns the character of Carabosse, who has been very much developed and extended. It is the view of the famous Soviet critic Yuri Slonimsky that Tchaikovsky always intended Carabosse — the "minor note" of evil in the ballet — to play a much more dominating part in the proceedings, and I believe that in Soviet Russia the rôle has already been strengthened. When the ballet was revived last year by the Royal Ballet's touring company opportunity was taken to embellish Carabosse, who, incidentally, on that occasion was played by a woman. The present production follows this trend, by in the first place making Carabosse far more naturalistic than hitherto, and secondly by enlarging the part quite considerably. A musical cut has been restored in the first act where Carabosse interrupts the birthday celebrations, and this gives time for her to play a speculative game of follow-my-leader with the courtiers that is at present more interesting in conception than in execution. Far, far more effective is the appearance Carabosse now makes in the last act. Her malignant glowering in the shadow of the castle as the Prince approaches with his magic kiss, is excellently done. I am less happy about the symbolic pantomime, right at the end of the ballet, where the Lilac Fairy gives Carabosse with a few haughty gestures her final come-uppance. While this possibly rounds off the ballet neatly, I cannot help feeling that the spacious grandeur of

Tchaikovsky's apotheosis music is unable to support the intervention of Carabosse at this point, which in consequence seems to me to be insensitive.

The only other musical cut to be restored is also in the first act, after the three Knitting Women have been apprehended by Cattalabutte. But this whole scene is badly presented, badly acted and the "new" music not over-interesting.

Looking at what the Royal Ballet haven't done rather than what they have, I must admit I was surprised to see that the *pas de trois* by Ashton for Florestan and his two Sisters, which uses the music for the Jewel Fairies' *pas de quatre,* has been retained, as I expected the old *pas de quatre* to be put back in this production. Certainly the existing *pas de trois* is not among Ashton's happiest inventions — unlike his interpolated solo for Aurora in the Vision Scene — but I can see some sense in retaining it, as the act, written by Petipa in the dog-days of the male dance, is woefully short of male solos. I see a lot less justice in retaining that Diaghilev/Nijinska invention the *Three Ivans,* who have always to me seemed very out of place at these nuptials. Also by appropriating the music, they prevent the *pas de deux* for Aurora and Florimund from having its rightful *coda,* which is a custom that would be better honoured by the breach than the observance. Admittedly this would leave the *divertissement* a little short, but there are of course the two character dances — Hop-o'-my-Thumb and the Ogre, and Cinderella and Prince Fortune — which Covent Garden still omit, and they could both be re-choreographed by either Ashton or De Valois. Talking of cuts in the music, it seems a great pity that the *pas de deux* should not only have lost its rightful *coda,* but also its introduction, and Covent Garden persist in leading straight into the *grand adagio.* The *Sarabande,* which follows the "Three Ivans" in the score, is a piece that any management could be forgiven for cutting, but many of the other cuts to Tchaikovsky's music are not so harmless. (As we now have complete scores of all the Tchaikovsky ballets — which was not so when the Royal Ballet originally mounted these works — I would have thought the time had come for the management to look very carefully at them to see what can be restored. Pages and pages of the most magnificent music are missing, both here and in *Swan Lake,* and anyone interested would do well to hear the complete recordings that Antal Dorati has made for Mercury.)

The general choreographic outline as preserved by Nicholas Sergueff is good, and I imagine it is probably more faithful to the Petipa original than any other version now in existence, as I understand that the Russians have taken fairly considerable liberties with the choreography, and certainly the Bolshoi version of the Rose Adagio — seen when the company played at the Davis Theatre, Croydon — is quite a way removed from the Petipa. For this reason it seems an even greater pity that the Royal Ballet could not have adhered to the Petipa/Tchaikovsky construction, and had the Awakening Scene at the end of act two, rather than the beginning of act three.

There is one last point to be made about the production, but we have made it so frequently in the past that I almost hesitate to mention it again. Quite simply and bluntly the average age of the company is far too young to give these classic ballets their right due. Until the Royal Ballet — and the problem is largely a financial one — can get dancers of age and experience to add ballast to the gilded youth now gathered round the court, the production will always have something of the air of a Ruritanian musical comedy about it, with chorus boys and chorus girls swirling around in a kind of teen-age beanfeast that can have little to do with the splendours of the Sun King's court, even before Messel got his hands on to it.

PERFORMANCE

ONE of the most incredible things about the first night performance was the playing of the orchestra. I say "incredible" and I mean just that, for it is surely hardly believable that a major opera house could, to take one flagrant example, produce a violin solo in the last act that was OUT OF TUNE. The whole orchestral performance was a disgrace to the Opera House, and had it been given on an opera night I have no doubt that the gallery would have screamed out its disapproval. I realise that the orchestra's double standard of performance for opera and for ballet comes about through a number of factors, over some of which, for example the number of rehearsals, the actual musicians have no control, but this does not excuse the management. It would be fascinating to know how many hours of rehearsal the orchestra allocated to *The Sleeping Beauty* — which they had not played for over a year — as compared with the number of hours that was allocated to Verdi's *Otello,* produced at around the same time. If the management is really unable to provide better musical accompaniment for ballet than it does at present, then perhaps it might consider coming to some arrangement with the Musicians' Union so that it could play gramophone records during ballet performances.

Partly through the orchestral playing, partly through the pristine horrors of

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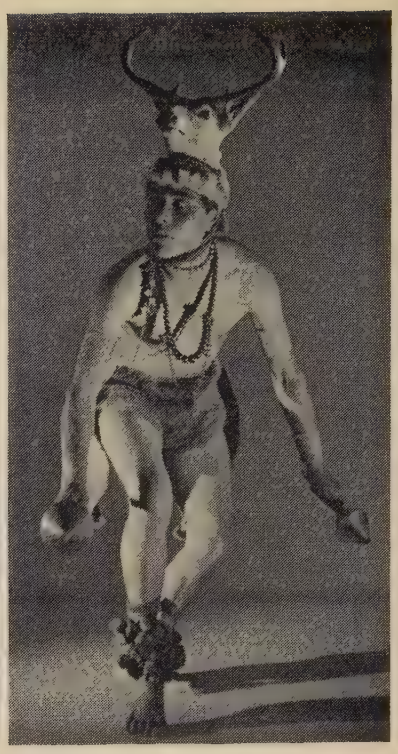
VISION AND MARRIAGE: Beriosova, as Princess Aurora, with Donald MacLeary, as Prince Florimund, in (left) the "Vision" scene and (right) in a "fish dive" from the pas de deux *in the final wedding scene.* *Photos: Houston Rogers.*



FOLK LORE AND LEGEND : The Mexican Dance Company in, left, a Guadalajara dance from Fiesta Jalisco. *Right, Aurelto Ochoa, as the Deer, from the ballet* Yumil Kax.

The Ancient Dance of Mexico

DANCES of Mayan and Aztec origin will be seen when the Mexican Dance Company, directed by Javier de Leon, appears at the Piccadilly Theatre for its first London season. Led by Princess Teo Xochitl, herself descended from Royal Aztec blood, the company will show not only these dances from an ancient source but also dances of a later Michoacan source and fiesta dances from various Mexican provinces.

To re-create this possibly most ancient dance art in existence, Javier de Leon has toured Mexico and made an intensive study of pre-Columbian sources of dance as well as of folk-lore which embodies the memory of Mexico's ancient glory. All this he has incorporated into theatrical presentation in much the same way the recent Bayanihan company presented the dances of the Philippine Islands.

Both the Aztecs and the Mayas have a tradition of dance which was not only connected with religious ritual but also as a spectacle given before kings and exalted persons. In the many ruins scattered through Mexico, the paintings and sculptures of pre-Spanish civilisations reveal that dance was a spontaneous expression of the people which penetrated every phase of life.

A PRINCESS DANCES : Left, Princess Teo Xochitl in the Aztec ritual, The Sacrifice of the Princess. *Right, another scene from* Yumil Kax *with Princess Teo Xochitl in the title rôle and Javier de Leon as the Prince. Photos : Raphael.*

STRANGE VISITATION: The sylph kneels by the chair of the sleeping James. The opening moment of La Sylphide *from an engraving in* Les Beautés de l'Opéra.

Ballet Perspectives: 19

La Sylphide

by CLIVE BARNES

BY 1832 the spirit of Romanticism — born seventy years earlier with Macpherson's notorious *Poems of Ossian* — had nearly faded in England. That year Walter Scott died, Byron, Keats and Shelley were already dead, Wordsworth intended to do little more than rewrite *The Prelude,* and already Alfred Lawn Tennyson was warming up in the wings in preparation for his celebrated incantation to Maud. But in France they ordered things differently. That same year Chopin gave his first Paris recital at the Salle Pleyel, Berlioz had completed the *Symphonie Fantastique* only the year before, Lamartine and Delacroix were just getting into their stride, while Théophile Gautier was merely a young sprig of twenty-one. It was into this Paris of 1832 that *La Sylphide* — and for that matter modern ballet — was born.

When in 1844 Gautier was writing of Taglioni's farewell, he said, in the words of Cyril Beaumont's translation: "This ballet (*La Sylphide)* marked a quite new era in choreography, and it was through her that romanticism was introduced into the realm of Terpischore. After *La Sylphide, Les Filets de Vulcain* and *Flore et Zéphyre* were no longer possible: the *Opera* was given over to gnomes, undines, salamanders, elves, nixes, wilis, peris — to all that strange and mysterious folk who lend themselves so marvellously to the fantasies of the *maître de Ballet.* The twelve palaces in marble and gold of the Olympians were relegated to the dust of the storerooms, and the scene-painters received orders only for romantic forests, valleys illuminated by the pretty German moonlight reminiscent of Heinrich Heine's ballads. Pink-coloured tights always remained pink, because there could be no choreography without tights; only the Greek cothurnus was exchanged for satin shoes. The new style led to a great abuse of white gauze, tulle, and tarlatan; the shades dissolved into mist by means of transparent dresses." However, if modern ballet was born with *La Sylphide* it was presaged a year earlier by the "Ballet of the Nuns" in Meyerbeer's opera *Robert le Diable* — in the words of André Levinson (*Marie Taglioni,* translated by Cyril Beaumont): "The cloister of *Robert le Diable* will be the cradle of the new art." The opera was the first important production of Dr. Véron's régime at the Paris Opéra. Véron took over the Opéra after having made one fortune through a patent medicine, and retired from the Opéra just four years later having made yet another fortune out of opera and ballet. Unquestionably he was a remarkable man, not least in the way he measured the pulse of his times every bit as effectively as he had measured the pulse of one of his patients.

The origin of the famous ballet scene, called *La Valse Infernale,* has been described by Levinson. The Faust-like story tells of Robert, son of the arch-fiend, known in the opera as Bertram, and the unsuccessful efforts of Bertram, to lead his son to damnation. The ballet sequence is set in the ruined convent of St. Rosalie, where Bertram summons up from their graves all those nuns who during their lifetime have been unfaithful to their sacred vows. These wili-like creatures, led by their recreant Abbess, seek to tempt Robert with worldly pleasures and lusts. The composer originally intended to set the scene in the classical garden of Olympus, but, according to Levinson, the architect Duponchel proposed the famous setting of the cloister with tombs, and having obtained Meyerbeer's approval, had Véron despatch the scene designer Cicéri to Arles to make sketches of the cloister of Saint Trophine.

For this scene, the setting gave the appearance of being lit by moonlight, an effect obtained by putting gas-jets in boxes and attaching them to the "flies" at the top of the stage — the first time that gas lighting had been so used in the theatre. It was part of Véron's policy to engage nothing but the best singers for the Opéra (his roster at the time included such celebrities as Mario, Rubini, Nourrit, Malibran and Lablache). And he also had under contract Marie Taglioni, already the most celebrated dancer of her time and regarded as the successor to Napoleon's favourite ballerina Emilie Bigottini.

It was decided that Taglioni should dance the rôle of the Abbess in Meyerbeer's opera, and the part became the first important landmark in her career. Levinson ascribes the choreography of the ballet to Coralli (later famous as part-choreographer of *Giselle),* but Beaumont, in *The Ballet Called Giselle,* says it was the work of Marie's father, Filippo Taglioni. The possibility is that both are right, with Coralli taking responsibility for the *ensemble,* and Taglioni arranging the solo dances for his daughter. The first night, when the ballet scene, much to Meyerbeer's discomfiture, secured most of the attention, was on November 22, 1831. (Levinson gives this date as November 21, and all the ballet writers follow him; opera historians — led by Gustave Kobbé — give November 22, and on the principle of horses for courses I have placed my money on them). Of more ultimate significance is the fact that the leading rôle of Robert was sung by the celebrated French tenor Adolpe Nourrit, this being his second collaboration with Taglioni, having appeared a year earlier in the Auber opera-ballet *Le Dieux et la Bayadère.*

La Sylphide had its first performance at the Paris Opéra on March 12, 1832. (Beaumont's *Complete Book of Ballets* originally gave the date as May 14 — which, although subsequently corrected by Beaumont himself, still frequently crops up in later writers.) It was described as being a ballet by Filippo Taglioni, but in fact the scenario was the work of Nourrit. Levinson writes: "The work is signed by Philippe Taglioni, who arranged the dances for it. There is nothing to show him capable of imagining and writing a theme of this poetic quality. Castil-Blaze's review reveals the secret to the public in a witty manner: 'The author, who preserves his anonymity, has been brought up *(S'est nourri)* on some good books of Northern mythology . . .' for *'s'est nourri'* one has only to read *'c'est Nourrit'."*

Nourrit's scenario is not entirely original, it being a very free translation of the writer Charles Nodier's *nouvelle écossaise* called *Trilby ou Le Lutin d'Argail.* This novel, the result of a pilgrimage to Scotland by Nodier, was then enjoying an immense vogue. But, as Levinson points out, "Nourrit's vision retained only the imponderable qualities of Nodier's story, its atmosphere and colour". The plot of the ballet is basically quite different from the novel, which told of a Scots fisherman and his wife, whose marital bliss is wrecked not by a sylphide but by a handsome male

FLIGHT TO THE FOREST : James, bewitched by the sylph, leaves his intended bride and follows the sylph into the forest. He gives her a bird's nest, but seeing it is alive, she returns it to its tree-top.

sylph who alienates the affections of the wife.

Nourrit presented his synopsis to Dr. Véron, who was delighted with it. In his *Memoirs* (quoted by Beaumont in *The Complete Book of Ballets),* Véron said of it: "the action was simple, easy to follow, and the end most touching." It was Véron's idea to call the ballet *La Sylphide,* and, "the better to justify the title, numerous flights of sylphides were devised, and, above all, a circling flight; there was fantasy in this ballet; the first act, which contrasted with the poetic setting of the second, diverted the spectator by more than one surprise". The original cast, in addition to Marie Taglioni as La Sylphide, included Joseph Mazilier as James Reuben, Caroline Brocard as Anna Reuben, his mother, Lise Noblet as Effie, M. Elie as Gurn and Mme Elie as Old Madge.

The success of the ballet was immediate and unprecedented. To say that *La Sylphide* caught the public fancy, or even started a new vogue, while true in both instances, is to underestimate its quite remarkable importance. It was a work that typified its period, and Levinson is being neither exaggerated nor fanciful when he compares its first performance with the publication of Lamartine's *Harmonies Poétiques* or the unveiling of Delacroix's great Romantic painting, *La Barque de Dante.* In 1836 we find the youthful Théophile Gautier in the course of one of his very first dramatic criticisms, writing in *La Presse* that Taglioni was "one of the greatest poets of our age, a genius of the same calibre as Lord Byron and Lamartine."

The ballet succeeded in putting the spirit of Walter Scott on to the stage, and it is perhaps no coincidence that when, years later in 1872, Taglioni filled in a questionnaire of her favourite likes and dislikes (a document which found its way into the collection of Anna Pavlova, and was lent by her to Levinson for reproduction in his book on Taglioni) she wrote in Scott's name as her favourite prose author.

The story of *La Sylphide* is bewitchingly simple. James Reuben, a Scots peasant, betrothed to Effie, is visited by a sylphide who captures his heart. It is the day James and Effie are to marry, but the celebrations are continually interrupted by the sylphide, who unseen to all but James hovers round the party declaring her love for the bewildered bridegroom. At last the Sylphide persuades James to leave Effie and run away with her to the forest. There, in the woodland glade, her grace and evident love enrapture the young peasant and he wishes to make her forever his. An old witch, Madge, to whom James had previously offered insults, tells him how this might be done, giving him a magic scarf. James eagerly takes the scarf, and places it around the sylphide. Her wings drop to the ground as she becomes mortal, then she dies in James's arms, and is borne to heaven by her sister sylphs. As James is left disconsolate, a marriage procession passes consisting of Effie and his rival for her hand, Gurn.

This story with its sweet Romantic agony set the ballet fashion for years to come, and even now is not yet a spent force. La Sylphide herself is the archetype of all those poetic unattainables who were to cloud the dreams and aspirations of ballet heroes for succeeding generations. Here too was "local colour", admittedly even then no absolute stranger to the ballet stage, yet here so skilfully applied as to give a quite new impetus to an already existing trend. And here too was a feeling for realistic *genre* that had been virtually lost to ballet since the days of Dauberval.

All the conditions were auspicious for *La Sylphide.* For not only was it ideally suited to the prevailing cultural climate, but it was able to exploit just those technical advances in stagecraft and choreography that were then coming to the fore. The more highly-developed use of gas lighting, and the new machinery for stage "flying", were mechanical achievements that needed this very vehicle. Even more significant was the way in which it provided the perfect excuse for the then comparatively new art of point-work, and it was *La Sylphide* and its inevitable successors that confirmed the ballerina in the style of classical ballet we know today. It is not known very precisely when point-work first made its appearance in ballet, although a lithograph, dated 1821, shows the dancer Fanny Bias on point in *Flore et Zéphyre.* It is important to remember that although the Romantic ballerinas went up on their points, their shoes were not blocked, and blocked shoes did not make their appearance until the end of the century when they were introduced by the Italians. Taglioni's shoes, a photograph of which is to be found in Levinson's study, were unblocked, but square-toed, and carefully darned up the side to give them greater strength.

The setting of *La Sylphide,* by the great Pierre Cicéri, set the style for Romantic stage design. However, of even more influence was the white muslin costume for La Sylphide, designed by Eugène Lami, which overnight banished the former high-waisted tunics previously worn by ballerinas. A less welcome innovation brought about by the ballet was the virtual eclipse of the male dancer, and *La Sylphide* was in effect the male dancer's notice to quit. Gautier says of the ballet, *en passant,* "in addition there are hardly any dances for men, which is a great comfort".

Furthermore, if *La Sylphide* marked the beginning of the reduction of the male to mere *porteur,* it also confirmed the ballerina in her absolute ascendancy, and in so doing tended to hold down choreographer and composer alike. The music for *La Sylphide* is vapid, umpty-tumpty by Jean Schneitzhoeffer (a man who was something of a wit, and once had visiting cards engraved "pronounced Bertrand"), and this set the pace in years to come. It is a sad and remarkable fact that during the next couple of decades when ballet was in ascendance, not one of the great Romantic composers provided it with a score. Think of what we would now give for a ballet by Berlioz, but here is perhaps just an accident of fate that the fair Miss Smithson was an actress and not a ballerina.

La Sylphide flew round the world like a new wind; a few months after the Paris première it was in London; on May 28, 1835, it reached St. Petersburg, danced by the otherwise unknown Mlle Croisette (Taglioni danced it there on September 6, 1837); by April 15, 1835, it had crossed the Atlantic and was danced in New York by Mlle Céleste, and on January 27, 1841, Cortesi produced a version of it for Fanny Cerrito at La Scala, Milan. And all this is not to mention Bournonville's version in Copenhagen in 1836.

It was London who had the first performance outside Paris, and this was on June 26, 1832, at, strangely enough for the time, the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden. The ballet was danced by Taglioni (La Sylphide), Paul Taglioni (James), Amalia Galdstre-Taglioni (Effie), Mme. Baudin (Anne Reuben), M. Theodore (Gurn), and the manager of the theatre, M. Laporte, himself, as Madge. This was very much a family affaire, as not only was the ballet produced by Filippo Taglioni, with a cast including as well as Marie also her brother and sister-in-law. Another family connection was to be found in the collaboration of Adolphe Adam, brother-in-law of the manager Laporte, and who later found fame through *Giselle.* It is not known quite what Adam did to Schneitzhoeffer's score, though it was doubtless something to its advantage. The scenery was by the admirable Grieves. After the first performance the anonymous critic of *The Times* announced to the world that "dancing is an art worthy to rank with poetry and painting" — a conviction in which he has subsequently occasionally wavered. In a valuable article by Ivor Guest, *La Sylphide in London (Ballet and Opera,* December, 1948), it is pointed out

that: "One of the reasons for the disappearance of *La Sylphide* from most repertoires in Europe so soon after Marie Taglioni's retirement, was that her supremacy had been such that few other dancers dared risk an invidious comparison by appearing in it too often. However, London saw several other dancers attempt the rôle: Amalia Taglioni (1832); Mlle Varin (1835); Pauline Duvernay (1837); Fanny Cerrito (1841); Miss Ballin (1843); the younger Marie Taglioni (1851); and Regina Forli (1852)."

Although *La Sylphide* may have gone into temporary eclipse elsewhere in Europe, in Copenhagen it has held a place in the repertory from its first production on November 28, 1836, right up until the present day. It was in 1834 that the great Danish ballet master, August Bournonville, saw Taglioni dance *La Sylphide* in Paris. Strongly attracted to the ballet he resolved to mount it for his young protegée Lucile Grahn, but the Royal Theatre could not afford to pay for the music. Consequently Bournonville commissioned new music from Herman Lovenskjold. The scenery was by Wallich and Christensen. *La Sylphide* was danced by Grahn, and the part of James — much extended from the Taglioni version — was undertaken by Bournonville himself.

Bournonville's *La Sylphide* is one of the best preserved Romantic ballets in the world, and in many ways can be regarded as Bournonville's masterpiece. Bournonville had studied with Vestris, and was himself a great exponent of the old French school (which is now, incidentally, found only in Copenhagen), and he consequently made the part of James equal to that of La Sylphide. It is one of the supreme achievements by a great master of 19th-century ballet. During its long history at Copenhagen's Royal Theatre, it had its 100th performance on October 2, 1883, and its 250th on November 5, 1950. The part of La Sylphide was subsequently danced by Augusta Nielsen, Juliette Price, Valborg Borchsenius, Ellen Price, Elna Jorgen-Jensen, Ulla Poulsen, Lilian Jensen, Margrethe Schanne and Kirsten Simone. The part of James has also been taken by Hans Beck, Gustav Uhlendorff, John Andersen, Poul Gnatt, Erik Bruhn, Henning Kronstam and Flemming Flindt. This production was seen at Covent Garden on August 11, 1953, when La Sylphide was danced by Schanne, James by Bruhn, and the great Danish mime Gerda Karstens appeared as Madge — a superb cast in a magnificent production.

Previously in London the ballet was not seen between 1852 and 1921, when excerpts from this same Bournonville version were given at the London Coliseum by a small Danish company led by Elna Jorgen-Jensen and John Andersen.

In Paris, the ballet's home town, it also fell out of the repertory after the scenery of the Paris Opéra version had been destroyed by fire on July 19, 1861. On January 10, 1892, Petipa produced a revised version, including additional music by Drigo. But except in Russia and in Copenhagen, then a completely forgotten backwater outside the mainstream of ballet, *La Sylphide* was lost. In 1946 Boris Kochno, artistic director of Les Ballets des Champs Elysées, asked Victor Gsovsky to mount it for his company. The production, which had décors by Christian Bérard, was rehearsed during a provincial tour of Great Britain, and first produced in Paris in December, 1946. La Sylphide was danced by Nina Vyroubova, and James by Roland Petit. This production was first seen in Great Britain on June 4, 1947, at the Winter Garden Theatre, when it was danced by Irène Shorik and Petit. Subsequently it was danced by Vyroubova, Tatiana Riabouchinska and Youly Algaroff.

This production was only a pastiche, made notable by the magnificent personal performance of Vyroubova (who unhappily only danced it three times in London) and the stylish décor of Bérard.

The next revival of *La Sylphide* emanated from Denmark, when a former ballet master of the Danish ballet, Harald Lander, produced *La Sylphide* for Le Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas. This was a variation on the Bournonville version and naturally used the Danish score. Its first performance was in Paris on December 8, 1953, with Rosella Hightower and Serge Golovine. These two dancers also appeared in the first British performance on January 25, 1954. The décor and costumes by Bernard Daydé were tasteless, and the dancing, apart from some interesting performances by the two principals, proved undistinguished.

The most recent production of the ballet was given by the newly-formed Scandinavian Ballet on February 2, 1960, at Växjö, Sweden. This version, also based on the Bournonville, has been mounted by the company's ballerina, Elsa Marianne von Rosen. Her husband, the well-known Danish ballet critic and dance historian, Allan Fridericia, contacted Ellen Price, great-niece of Juliette Price, one of Bournonville's favourite pupils and the first ballerina to dance the Copenhagen *La Sylphide* after Grahn and Nielsen. Ellen Price (incidentally, the original model for Eriksen's celebrated statue of the Little Mermaid in Copenhagen) has herself danced every female rôle in the ballet. Now 82 years old, Ellen Price went to stay with the Fridericias and gave them a number of dance and mime sequences that have long been lost from the Royal Danish Ballet's production. The first performance of this production was danced by Elsa Marianne von Rosen and Vladimir Skouratoff.

For a very long time Marie Rambert has longed to mount *La Sylphide* for the Ballet Rambert. E. C. Mason, assistant editor of *Dance and Dancers,* suggested contacting Von Rosen and inviting her to mount it for the British company. With décor and costumes by Robin and Christopher Ironside, it was first given by the Ballet Rambert on July 20, with von Rosen and Flindt — as guest artists — in the leading rôles. The part of La Sylphide was later taken by Lucette Aldous.

DEATH OF THE SYLPHIDE: Tricked by a sorceress, Madge, James gives the sylph a poisoned scarf which causes her wings to drop off and her death. Attendant sylphs bear her body away to the tree-tops, while James is left to mourn. On the left can be seen the wedding procession of Effie, who, after James' sudden departure, turned her affections to his rival, Gurn.
All the illustrations in this article are from Les Beautés de l'Opéra.

WEDDING PRESENT FOR A PRINCESS: The charming engraved crystal goblet, designed by Stephen Rickard, which the Royal Ballet gave to its President, Princess Margaret, on the occasion of her marriage to Antony Armstrong-Jones. The goblet stands 9 inches high, 6 inches wide at the brim, took six weeks to make and one to engrave.

curtain up!

Everybody's doing it

CONGRATULATIONS this month to British ballet's most eligible bachelor, John Gilpin, whose engagement to Sally Judd, also a member of Gilpin's company, Festival Ballet, was announced while they were appearing in Nice. It is possible that they will be married in August during the company's London season at the Royal Festival Hall.

In addition to getting engaged, Gilpin also found time to create the title rôle in Lifar's *Bonaparte* during the Nice festival. According to the press account, Lifar personally picked Gilpin for this part, which was apparently a great honour for Gilpin. Who, I wonder, is kidding whom? It has been no secret for quite some years that Gilpin is not exactly the least talented dancer in Festival Ballet; in fact his talent is neither unknown nor unpraised by something like the entire world of ballet.

More matrimonial news and our best wishes go with Brenda Bolton (one of this season's several departures from the Royal Ballet), who is leaving for Australia to marry. From that part of the world also comes news of yet another ex-Royal Ballet ballerina, Elaine Fifield, who has married Leslie Farley, who runs a copra plantation in New Guinea. Previously married to Royal Ballet conductor John Lanchbery, Fifield left for Australia a few years ago when she put in some appearances with the Borovansky Ballet. We join her many admirers in this country in wishing her happiness in her new surroundings.

To "down under" again we send congratulations to the parents of Paul James Chatfield, who was born in Auckland, New Zealand, on June 9. Mother Rowena Jackson and father Philip Chatfield, who left the Royal Ballet a year ago to settle down and raise a family, made their last stage appearances recently when they revived *Les Patineurs* in New Zealand. Now Chatfield is in business, selling cosmetics wholesale.

Markova keeps on talking

ALL those ancient enough will remember that, just after talkies started to change the whole face of the cinema, London was plastered with posters which merely said, "She talks". Without any further clue, the whole world of that time knew the "She" referred to possibly the greatest star of all time — Greta Garbo. Much the same thing could be said of Alicia Markova, who since her recent illness and until she is well enough to dance again has done a great deal of talking in public. At a recent B.B.C. Light Music concert at the Royal Festival Hall, she, looking quite wonderful, told the story of *The Sleeping Beauty* while the orchestra played excerpts from Tchaikovsky's famous ballet. Owing to the success of this she now has her own half-hour radio programme — *Markova's Ballet Call* — which started on June 28. Every Tuesday, at 1.10 p.m., for twelve weeks on the B.B.C. Home Service, she plays records of ballet music and introduces each record with personal reminiscences. As the first ballet disc jockey, Markova is possibly reaching the biggest audience any ballerina ever had.

New hope at Notting Hill

LAST month I expressed the hope that the London County Council would have second thoughts on their decision (exclusively reported in *Dance and Dancers)* not to give town planning approval to the new Mercury Theatre which it had been originally hoped would be in the new site opposite the old one.

I am glad to say now that all is not yet lost. The Arts Council support the idea of a new theatre in Notting Hill, and it has now been stated that the L.C.C. are by no means opposed in principle to the proposal.

Talks are going on to try to reconcile the plans with the usual town planning standards (particularly, I gather, so far as parking facilities are concerned), and the Town Planning Committee, according to their chairman, Mr. Edmonds, look forward to considering revised proposals.

General post

WHEN Festival Ballet give their London season at Festival Hall they will not only see their ex-principal dancer, Flemming Flindt, appearing in a season with Ballet Rambert at Sadler's Wells Theatre but also many of their ex-principal soloists playing in *The Princess* at the Strand Theatre just across the river. This musical based on *The Sleeping Beauty* which contains a great deal of dancing will use Janet Overton, Keith Beckett, Selena Wylie, Terry Gilbert, Donald McAlpine, Ann Morell, Barry Wilkinson and Richard Morris, who were at one time or another in the Braunsweg/Dolin company. The dance stars are to be Violette Verdy, who has had so many triumphs in America since we last saw her in England (with Festival Ballet, of course) and Pierre Lacotte, who has not danced in England since he was at Covent Garden with the Paris Opéra company.

Full marks for Fulham

AT a time when theatres are closing down and dying like flies in a hot summer, it is encouraging to know that the local council of Fulham, in London, have just spent £40,000 in building a new theatre — in the open air. In Bishop's Park, with its river frontage and pleasant surroundings, it is possible for around 3,000 people to enjoy entertainments — all for free. What is more, many of the ninety or so spectacles to be given in the theatre between its opening on July 2 and September will include performances of ballet. The theatre is also open to the various dance schools in the neighbourhood for their annual displays. Our congratulations to Fulham for being such a far-sighted borough who may have not only paved the way for other boroughs but also local councils in other areas.

A prodigal returns

ONE of the most touching events in the ballet theatre during the last year or two was the generous ovation given to Anne Heaton when she gave what was to have been her last performance with the Royal Ballet. This was at Covent Garden on September 2, 1959, when she appeared as the Betrayed Girl in *The Rake's Progress.*

It was no secret at the time that Heaton did not want to give up dancing, but was impelled to do so only by an arthritic condition which made any dancing painful and entirely prevented her from tackling the big classical rôles.

So it came as no surprise when she accepted an invitation to dance in pantomime last Christmas, in a part tailored for her by Robert Helpmann in *Aladdin* at the London Coliseum.

Now, however, she is back in ballet mak-

ing her return with the Royal Ballet's touring section during its recent tour in Ireland and the English provinces. She will be seen again at Covent Garden during the Royal Ballet's joint season in August. As a guest artist she will appear in two of her famous parts — as the Bride in *Blood Wedding* and as the Chateleine in *La Fête Etrange*. Everyone will be glad that her unique gifts are not to be lost to us entirely after all.

Dixon still venturing

IN a recent witty American revue, *The Billy Barnes Revue,* at the Lyric, Hammersmith, a girl crossed the stage between various items and sang a few verses starting "I wonder what happened to —?" and each verse was about some character no longer in the news. Some people may have been saying much the same thing about Ballet Venture which appeared at Croydon in a programme of works mostly by Norman Dixon.

In case anybody *did* wonder, I hear that, after the season, Dixon accepted an invitation to mount one of his dramatic ballets in Portugal, a country in which he has appeared before. On arrival, he realised that his serious works would not be to the local taste, so he revived the plotless *Preciosa* instead. This *divertissement,* received rather coolly in London, apparently went down well in the San Carlos Opera House in Lisbon, and Dixon is staying a little longer as ballet master in order to mount a new work.

New company for London

WHEN Nora Kaye and her husband Herbert Ross left American Ballet Theatre in the first stages of its European tour, they went to Brussels to meet Henriques Pimentel, who is forming for them a new group called Ballets of Two Worlds. After a tour which includes such places as Paris, Berlin and Monte Carlo, it seems likely that the company will be seen in London in December. The possible date of this début is December 8, at the annual gala arranged by Dame Margot Fonteyn (this year assisted by Madame Marie Rambert) in aid of the R.A.D. and which on this occasion is to be held at Covent Garden. After that, a season is planned for a London theatre.

The company will have at least two programmes. One will include four of Ross's short ballets, amongst them *Caprichos* (seen here when given by American Ballet Theatre) and the controversial *The Maids*. This latter is based on a play by Jean Genet, *Les Bonnes,* and given in London at the Royal Court Theatre. I understand that in its ballet version it would probably be banned as obscene if only anyone could understand what it was about.

The other programme will be the full evening production of *The Dybbuck*. For years now I seem to have been reading about one American company after another proposing to mount a ballet version of this famous Jewish legend. At one time Kenneth MacMilllan considered it and recently there has been talk about Jerome Robbins doing it. Now it seems that those who never saw the play given by the famous Habbima company from Israel will have a chance of finding out what it is all about — and why it has caught the imagination of so many choreographers. Anyway, whatever the result, London will be glad to welcome back Nora Kaye, one of the most beloved of American artists, as well as getting a better opportunity of seeing the choreographic talents of her husband.

Back from the wars

POOR Western Theatre Ballet have been in the wars again — this time, a repeat of the Peninsula War.

It seems that their contract for a Spanish tour was not foolproof and, although the company was doing good business, the money did not come to them — or very little of it.

This is not the first time that a small British company — or even a larger one for that matter — has gone abroad with disastrous results for itself. Presumably if business is good somebody must profit — but who, one wonders? Certainly not the unfortunate dancers, who always seem to get the blunt end of the stick.

Incidentally, Spain seems an unlucky place for touring ballet companies. One of the last manifestations of the de Basil Ballet dragged itself wearily to final collapse through a long Spanish tour, and even the Diaghilev Ballet, judging by recent accounts, did not do so well in Spain, though perhaps this was more understandable because the company was marooned there during the First World War. However, all these disasters point to one thing — greater care in studying contracts for overseas presentation and complete faith in the integrity of whoever is presenting the company in foreign countries. The world, dear reader, is still packed full of wolves and innocent Red Riding Hoods still have as little change of survival today as they did in the past. It is sad, though, that this should have happened to Western Theatre Ballet just as they were making such a splendid effort to get on the up and up.

Country House Festival

FOLLOWING in the steps of Glyndebourne, more and more English country houses are becoming interested in festivals. In fact, Hintlesham Hall, the Elizabethan country house near Ipswich, is now embarking on its 10th festival. Ballet has played its part in these festivals before, but this year's programme on the garden stage is even more ambitious. On July 22, the world première of a new ballet by Keith Beckett, *The Vision and the Fool,* takes place. Marina Svetlova will dance the rôle of the Vision and the choreographer himself takes the part of the Village Fool. In addition to this, a group of Georgian dancers led by Anatoly Nakashidze will give their first performance in Britain. This dancer was recently granted political asylum in England while touring here with a Russian group. Festivals of this kind are much to be encouraged as providing yet another use for our stately homes.

happy birthday to...

		August
Roy Tobias	New York City Ballet	22
Merial Evans	The Royal Ballet	25
John O'Brien	Ballet Rambert	29
		September
Audrey Farriss	The Royal Ballet	1
Teresa Mann	Canadian National Ballet	2
Yvonne Mounsey	New York City Ballet	2
Anne Morrell	In The Princess	3
Sylvia Mason	Canadian National Ballet	5
Errol Addison	Royal Ballet Organisation	8
Judith Colpman	Canadian National Ballet	9
Noreen Sopwith	The Royal Ballet	10
Norman Morrice	Ballet Rambert	10
Michèle Seigneuret	Béjart Ballet	11
Andrina Miller	American Ballet Theatre	11
Lizzie Rode	Royal Danish Ballet	12
Vassili Trunoff	London's Festival Ballet	14
Peter Darrell	Western Theatre Ballet	16
Catherine Carr	Canadian National Ballet	16
Liubov Tchernicheva		17
Frederick Ashton	The Royal Ballet	17
David Poole	In Cape Town	17
Geoffrey Davidson	London's Festival Ballet	18
Sally Bayley	Canadian National Ballet	18
Michael Somes	The Royal Ballet	22
Svetlana Beriosova	The Royal Ballet	24

Dancer You Will Know

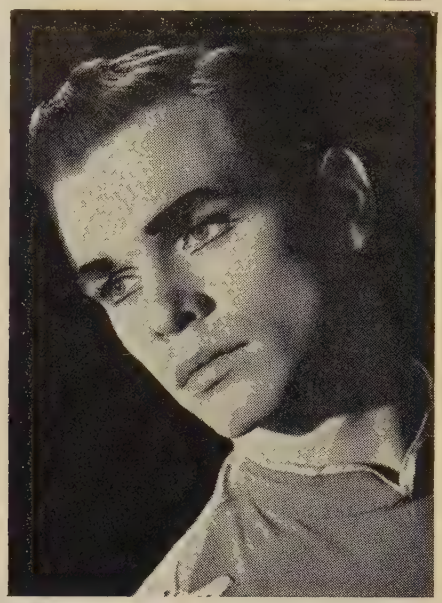


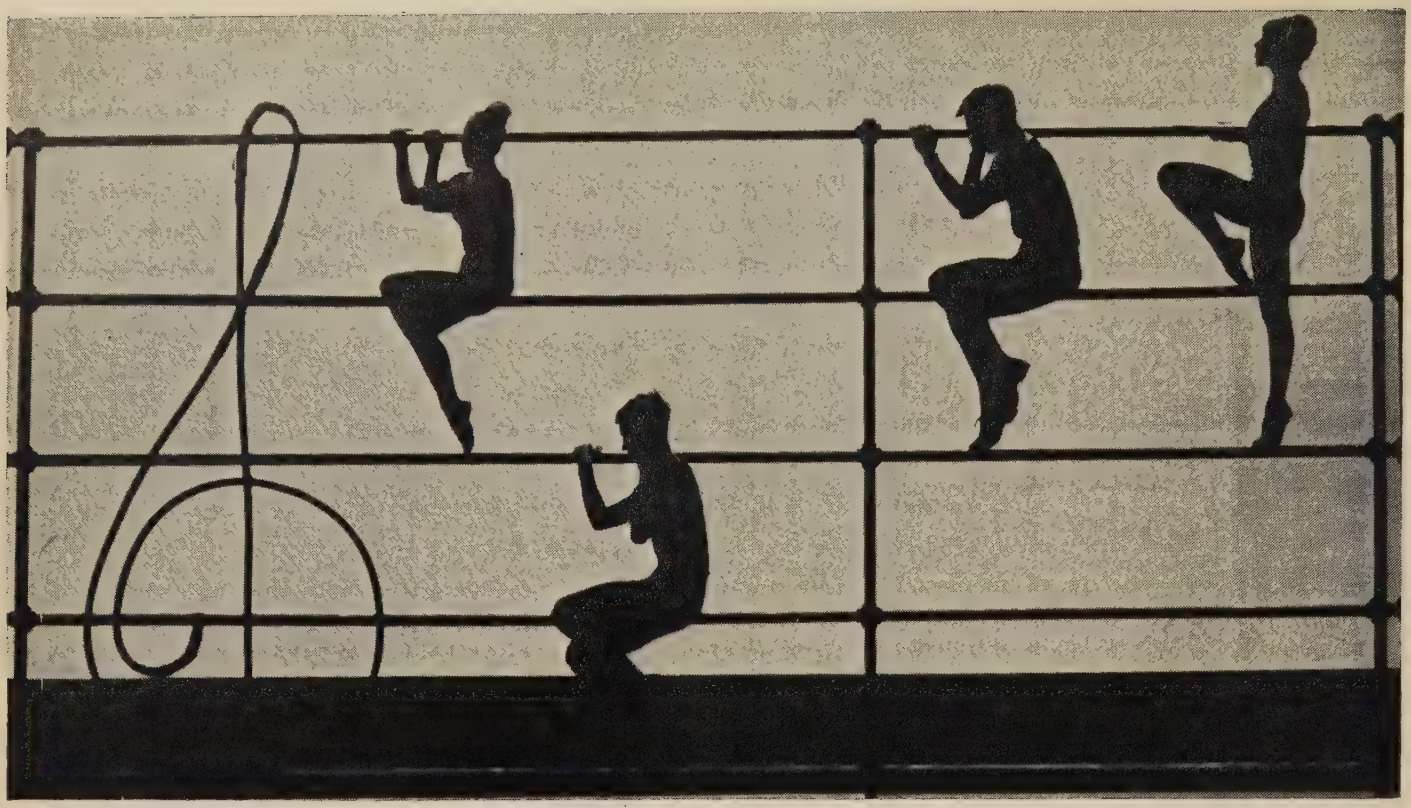
Photo : Houston Rogers.

BEN STEVENSON

BORN in Southsea. Started dancing at the age of 7 at Miss Mary Tonkin's School, Southsea. When 15 received a grant to the Arts Educational School, where he took R.A.D. exams. and won the Adeline Genée Gold Medal. In 1956 joined the Sadler's Wells Opera Ballet, and later the Theatre Ballet. After an illness, in 1957 joined the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden. In 1959 he joined London's Festival Ballet, where he was immediately made a soloist.
Creations : (for Royal Ballet) Pas de Trois *in* Agon. *Rôles : (for Royal Ballet)* Pas de Trois *in* The Shadow; *(for Festival Ballet) the Cadet and the Old Man in the Bathchair in* London Morning; *Mazurka in* Les Sylphides; *John Gilpin rôles in* Concerti, Variations for Four *and* Etudes.

BEN STEVENSON has always been elusive. Sometimes he could be found on Covent Garden's programme as John Stevens, sometimes as Benjamin Stevens. And this elusiveness did not end with the mere matter of his name. Suddenly a boy would emerge from the *corps de ballet,* dancing impeccably, with superb style, then just as suddenly he would disappear into the background. Unpredictable, even wayward, the best thing that Stevenson did with the Royal Ballet was his matching with Graham Usher in MacMillan's underrated and now lamented *Agon*. Here his finesse and classical style made an immediate impression. He looked a Royal Ballet star of the future, but as startlingly as he had appeared, he was gone.

Since his reappearance with Festival Ballet, London has had few chances to see him. However, it is apparent that he is dancing unusually well. A sight of him in Gilpin's rôle in *Variations for Four* revealed his promise more clearly than anything else. Loose-limbed and fluent, with a natural elegance of line, his main weakness is an intermittent diffidence of personality. He has the promise of one of the finest male dancers in the country, but not yet the confidence.



FIGURATION : *A scene from Malcolm Goddard's ballet to Rolf Liebermann music. On the musical bars are, top line, Prudence Rodney, Malcolm Goddard and Gillian Lynne. On the lower bar is John Frost.*

Success with the Seventh

After six previous programmes of varying merit, Sunday Ballet Club scored its biggest success yet in the programme of five works which was presented at the Lyric Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue, on June 12.

Reviewed by CLIVE BARNES

Photographed by ROY ROUND

DISENCHANTMENT 1 and 2: *Keith Rosson and Brenda Bolton in Clover Roope's* pas de deux, *to John White music, which was revived from a previous programme.*

WITHOUT any question the Sunday Ballet Club performance at the Lyric Theatre on June 12 was markedly better than any of the six predecessors organized under the same auspices. I can go further by saying that it was probably among the best-ever workshop programmes seen in this country.

Before discussing the actual programme it might be interesting to consider how this mild but invigorating success might affect the club's future. *Dance and Dancers* has sometimes been accused of taking the Sunday Ballet Club altogether too seriously, and it is certainly true that we have, following the precedent we first established with the other Workshop organisations, devoted a great deal of space to its activities. To combine the rôles of warmest advocate with harshest critic has not always been easy, and the Club itself has on occasions viewed our intervention with good-natured distaste, feeling no doubt that it could get along very nicely without the dubious assistance of self-appointed, back-seat drivers.

The Club's aims have always been a good deal more obvious than clear. Obviously it has wanted to promote new choreographers, but why it wishes to pursue this aim has never been made particularly clear. Undoubtedly it is valuable, even essential, to have in London some organisation willing and able to give opportunities to the apprentice choreographer. What would be even more valuable would be some organization able to act as a storm-centre for new ideas and even new trends in

choreography. Whether it will in time be able to undertake this second function seems to me to be a matter of the greatest importance. Certainly if it is to do so, the Club's scope will have to be enlarged, and its position (not least its financial position) strengthened. Where this seventh programme could well be helpful is in the increased prestige that is brought to the Club — nothing succeeds like success! Already I hear encouraging news that the Club's committee, after a fair amount of diligent prodding, have got around to discussing ways and means with certain established choreographers. From such a liaison of well-matched minds, something important could easily emerge.

Perhaps also a warning note should be struck even about this latest programme. Although when compared to its six forerunners this was seventh heaven, it was a fortuitous heaven produced by the same hit or miss methods that had earlier resulted in something much more like hell. It so happened that all the works presented to the Club on this occasion were by experienced professional dancers, and all used simple, practical costumes and, in most cases, décor. Furthermore, the ideas behind all the ballets were more or less workable. Where the Club deserves most credit is in the magnificent way they put these ballets on, and by this I mean not only its actual staging (which as ever was miraculous in the nearly impossible circumstances) but also in such varied functions as front-of-house management, publicity and press relations. However, I still think that the Club would be vastly strengthened, if the committee could co-opt some person with a considerable practical knowledge of the ballet world to assist it in its deliberations. He (or she) need not be called artistic director, although I suspect she (or he) would find quite a lot to artistically direct.

Figuration

Choreography by Malcolm Goddard. Music by Rolf Liebermann (Concerto for Jazz-Band and Symphony Orchestra).

Cast
GILLIAN LYNNE
PRUDENCE RODNEY
MALCOLM GODDARD JOHN FROST

ALTHOUGH Malcolm Goddard, one of the original members of London's Festival Ballet, has had a lot of experience in choreographing for TV and musicals, this was his first complete stage ballet. Intended to show by mixture the contrast between jazz dancing and classical ballet, the work was set to Rolf Liebermann's *Concerto for Jazz-Band and Symphony Orchestra* — a sensible, but nevertheless unfortunate, choice. While the score with its turgid mixture of symphonic swing, and swing symphonics, certainly provided something of the right background for Goddard's choreographic demonstration, the music itself is so dull and banal that it proved more of a liability than a convenience.

The main fault of the choreography was its lack not so much of originality as compulsion. It was a neat, professional little essay in the early Jerome Robbins manner. Most interesting aspect of the ballet was its use of parallel bars at the back of the stage, which were most intelligently utilised to provide the dance patterns with a vertical dimension. The opening, with the dancers silhouetted on the bars like musical notes on a stave, was perhaps obvious, yet nonetheless effective. The lighting had much the same slick air of showmanship that characterised the whole ballet, and the choreography was exceptionally well rehearsed and performed. Outstandingly successful was Gillian Lynne, whose fine technical command and lithe fluency made this one of the best performances of the evening.

The Lark Ascending

Choreography by Leo Kersley. Music by Vaughan Williams (The Lark Ascending). **Décor by Bernard Myers, after Samuel Palmer. Costumes by Edwin Kersley.**

Cast
The Lark ..... JANE EVANS
A Peasant ..... FRANKLIN WHITE
His Wife...BRIDGET KELLY-ESPINOSA
Their Children ..... CHERYL ST. CLARE
JOHN PARSONS

THE idea of combining the painting of Samuel Palmer with the music of Vaughan Williams is undeniably a good one, and deserved to produce a rather better ballet than was in fact achieved. Possibly the major fault lay in the basic unsuitability of the music chosen (a contemplative, lyrical piece for solo violin and orchestra) and the failure of the décor, costumes and lighting to give any very clear suggestion of Palmer.

The slight theme of the ballet based itself on a peasant family of the time of Palmer, with the uncomplicated, bucolic happiness of their life suggested by the lark itself, whose ascent, and indeed very existence, gave every appearance of having been foisted on the ballet by the score. The choreography for the lark failed to suggest flight, and was a shade too "cygnificant" in the way of an Odette. The dances for the peasant family had a certain quality of strength, and at times the ballet genuinely did evoke the atmosphere of a golden age and the simple life. The ballet, which was more than adequately danced by its cast, misfired, but misfired interestingly.

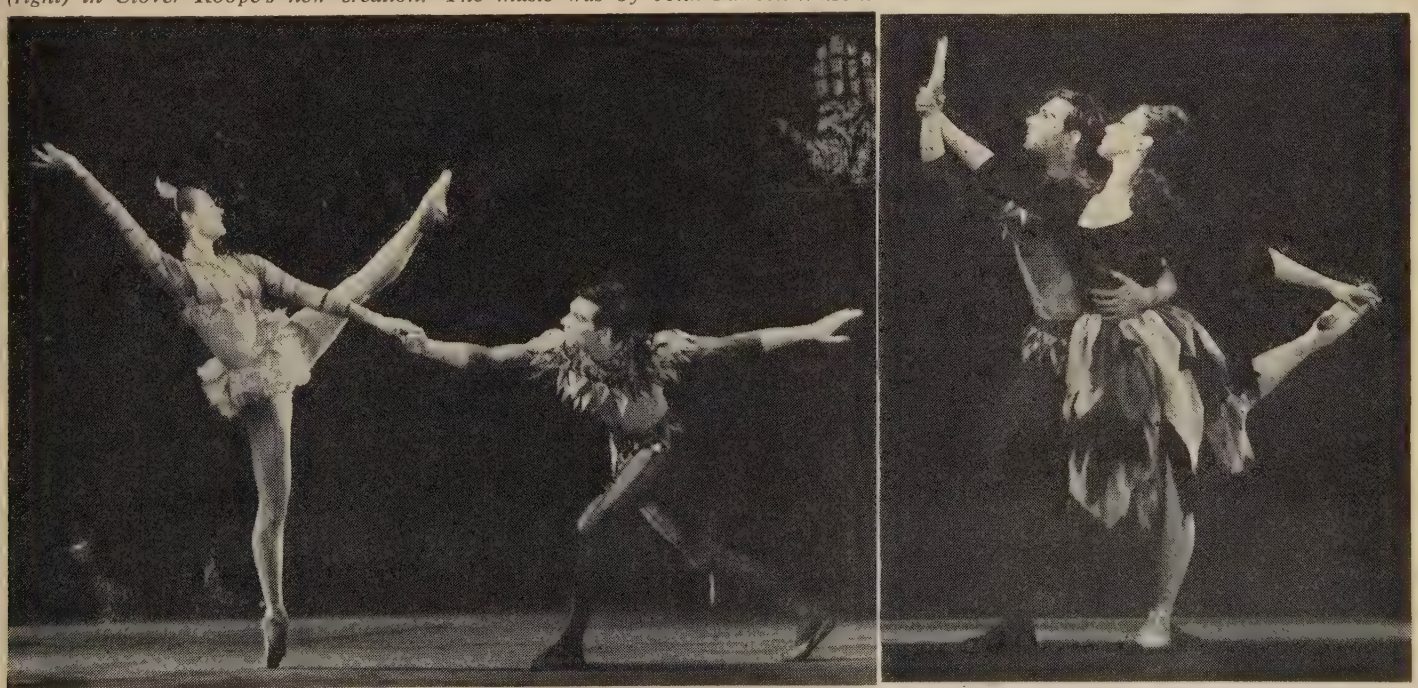
Disenchantment 1 and 2

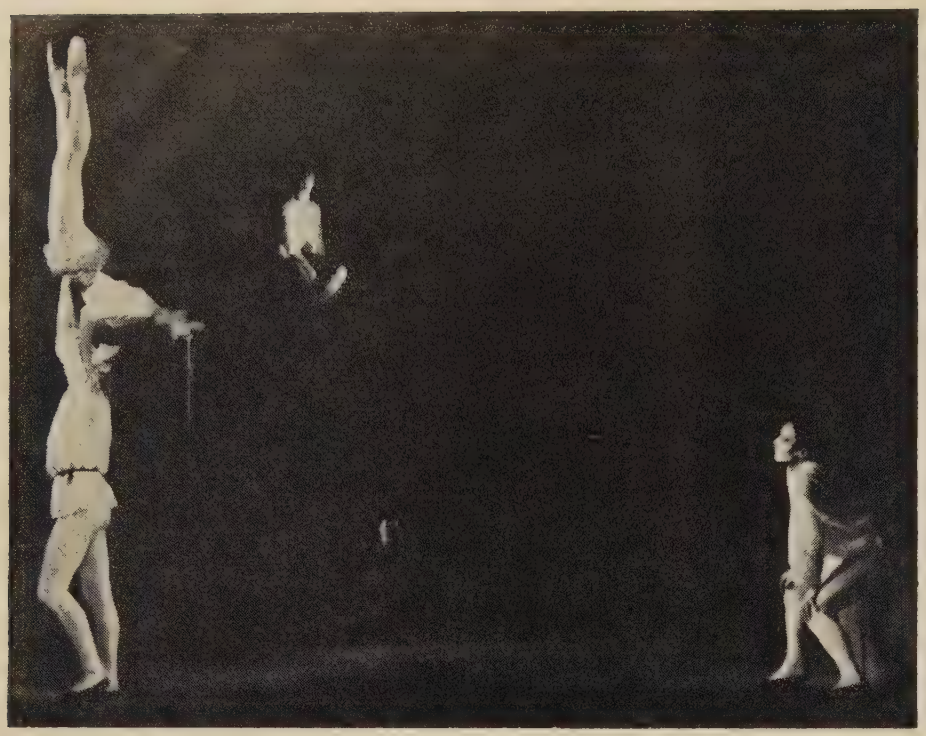
Choreography by Clover Roope. Music by John White. Costumes by Michael Baldwin.

Cast
BRENDA BOLTON KEITH ROSSON

WHY do human relationships — suddenly and apparently for no reason — go astray? Why do two people (lovers, friends, even business acquaintances, but particularly lovers) click out of joint, with the unexpected thump of a thunderbolt from a clear blue sky? Why honey, do you have to be such a damned, pulverising *bore*, when only yesterday it all seemed so much fun? That, or something like it, is what I suspect Clover Roope thought her two linked *pas de deux, Disenchantment I* and *II* were about.

SLEIGHT OF HAND: *Clive Molloy, as the Boy, with Robin Haig as the Girl (left) and Monica Mason as the Cigarette Girl (right) in Clover Roope's new creation. The music was by John Fawcett-Wilson.*





ONE IN FIVE: *Above and below, Deanne Bergsma with the four other clowns — played by Derek Rencher, Christopher Newton, Lawrence Ruffell and John Sale — in Ray Powell's new work to Josef and Johann Strauss music and designed by Derek Rencher.*

Disenchantment, as any keen student of Thurber will know, is a contemporary malaise, particularly around what Mort Sahl calls the "peripheral regions of insecurity". It could make a good theme for a ballet, and that it has failed to do so here is due to its choreographer's inability to motivate the basic situation of boy meets girl and girl (or boy) gets bored. She has been content just to describe the very commonplace situation without any explanation or comment. Furthermore, by a failure to particularise her characters (these are just any boy, any girl, the whole screaming lot of us) she allows these two *pas de deux* to take on a weighty sententiousness they are unable to support. Psychological situations can make fine food for ballet, but they require, I would say, the very careful treatment that Tudor gave to Hagar's sexual frustration in *Pillar of Fire*. By a factual setting and a shrewd examination — in dance terms — of Hagar's motivation, she becomes a symbolic figure in a way, and to a degree, that a faceless everywoman could not. It is easier, curiously enough, to find the universal in the particular than to accept it in the avowedly universal.

Enough of this sermonising, which was only prompted by my pleasure in finding in Clover Roope a young choreographer with an interest in people and the strange things that happen to them. Technically her *pas de deux* were both too long, the cyclic form of the second was too apparent to be ignored yet not quite apparent enough to make its point. There was more fluency in the dancing than invention (not altogether a bad thing this), and the choreographer failed to distinguish sufficiently between male and female movement.

This, incidentally, came from an earlier programme — the first revival produced by the Club — but had been re-dressed and re-lit. Michael Baldwin's artistic tatters proved both modish and pointless, while Peter Jay's ingenious lighting seemed too obtrusive, compelling admiration rather than respect. This "Appian-way" approach to lighting (a dancer could scarce raise an eyebrow without it being made the excuse for a lighting cue) is in a sense exciting, but it served to draw attention away from the choreography in a mildly self-congratulatory manner, and made the *pas de deux* into something of a *pas de trois*.

The ballet was well danced by Brenda Bolton, and particularly the ever-improving Keith Rosson, whose masculine assurance is increasing by literal leaps and encouraging bounds.

Sleight of Hand

Choreography by Clover Roope. Music by John Fawcett-Wilson. Décor and costumes by Michael Baldwin.

Cast

The Girl ..... ROBIN HAIG
The Boy ..... CLIVE MOLLOY
The Cigarette Girl ... MONICA MASON

FOR her third and most recent ballet Clover Roope has once again tried to deal with the theme of disenchantment and broken relationships This time she has set her ballet in a specific locale — a lightly-sketched night club — and attempted, with what the Divorce Courts call an intervening party, to give some kind of explanation for the break-up between the two lovers. Here the boy and girl are speciality acrobats in a floor-show. They are first seen rehearsing their act, watched by a cigarette girl, who jealously wants to break up their relationship. After the rehearsal the cigarette girl makes a play for the boy, who is moderately responsive. At the actual performance the acrobatic act goes wrong, but in a not altogether convincing sort of epilogue to the ballet, the two lovers are re-united and enchantment returns.

Here Roope is dealing with an actual situation rather than a generalisation, and consequently the theme has positive possibilities. Unfortunately the choreography is far from convincing; the speciality act is very ordinary and fails to convey tension, the character of the cigarette girl (a somewhat glowering *femme fatale* on the sidelines) is hardly delineated at all, and the dancing (apart from an isolated tango *pas de deux)* never seems to get any impetus from the wafer-thin, biscuit-dry music by John Fawcett-Wilson. There were undeniably some good things in Roope's choreography, but nearly all of them were visual rather than dramatic or expressive. Here perhaps is the reason why *Sleight of Hand* (and for that matter *Disenchantment)* was both interesting and disturbingly

unsatisfying — the choreographer's abilities at the moment do not seem to coincide with her aspirations. It would possibly now be a sound idea for her to attempt a plotless ballet, and then having got this additional experience return to the for her more difficult problems of expressive dance.

The ballet was helped both by its staging and by its setting by Michael Baldwin. The acrobat costumes — reminiscent of, but not derivative from, Bérard's *Les Forains* — were especially attractive, and the whole production of the ballet showed the simplicity and taste that, running throughout the entire evening, made this Sunday Ballet Club performance so much more rewarding than its predecessors.

The dancing of Robin Haig and Clive Mulloy was appealing. Haig has one of those piquant perky faces more common to French ballet than English, and she gave this part a pleasantly understressed air of pathos. Molloy has a most interesting personality and an impressive — if at present ragged — technique. Monica Mason, a promising member of the Covent Garden *corps*, danced well but failed to make her *dame* sufficiently *fatale*.

One in five

Choreography by Ray Powell. Music by Josef and Johann Strauss. Costumes by Derek Rencher.

Cast
DEREK RENCHER
CHRISTOPHER NEWTON
DEANNE BERGSMA
LAURENCE RUFFELL JOHN SALE

AND here it was — after seven programmes including one or two minor but creditable successes, here was the Sunday Ballet Club's first hit, a palpable hit. Ray Powell's *One in Five* is effortlessly simple and extremely effective. An unashamed product of ballet's corn-belt, it proves (if any of us have been misguided enough to forget it) that there is nothing wrong with corn served in the right way and at the right temperature. It sets out *merely* to entertain (*quelle horreur!*) and triumphantly justifies its existence by succeeding. I split my sides laughing — as they used to quote in advertisements in the days before Levin and Muller — and now, split-sides and all, let me pay tribute to all concerned.

In his first ballet, *Sweet Echo*, for the Sadler's Wells Choreographic Group, Ray Powell showed a certain choreographic facility and a marked ability to bring out the best in a young dancer. (In that instance it was the then unknown Anya Linden, and he provided for her one of her best-ever rôles.) *Sweet Echo* was one of those commendably promising apprentice ballets, that one notes and expects to be followed up. Strangely enough it was not followed up, and some six years separate it from Ray Powell's second choreographic venture *One in Five*. Here he has left himself with only a vestigial theme — that of five clowns entertaining impromptu (you know) an audience — but filled it out with a lot of refreshingly unclever invention and garnished it with a deft sense of production, none the worse for being slick.

The dancing is brilliant, and in a sense no choreographer (not even Cranko and MacMillan) has gauged so nicely the rise in technique of the Royal Ballet male dancer. The principal fault of the choreography is its uneven musicality — sometimes Powell can work right across not only the beat but, more significantly, the grain of the music. At other times, equally, he can use the music, here an attractive selection of for the most part lesser-known clan Strauss, very effectively production-wise. The opening of his ballet, a clown climbing up from the orchestra pit, opening the curtains Pagliacci-style and suddenly becoming aware of the audience, is as neat as the ending, when the five dancers go on and on while they implore the stage manager to lower the curtain. In between Powell has contrived *ensembles* and a charmingly original *pas de deux* that are buoyantly zestful.

Derek Rencher's *commedia dell'arte* costumes were just right and his arrangement of ladders, props and lights made a superb background for the ballet. Similarly, Peter Jay's lighting, here beguilingly simple, added immensely to the effectiveness of the work. The dancing was also brilliant. The four boys — Ruffell and Sale bouncily exuberant, Rencher very funny, and Newton (the real surprise of the cast) revealing a surprising warmth and charm of personality. What remarkable dancers the Royal Ballet has hidden away in its *corps*! The star of the ballet was the delicious, long-limbed South African girl, Deanne Bergsma. The Sunday Ballet Club can already claim credit for having given her her first chance in Faith Worth's *The Venus Flower*, and her quality has for some time been apparent. Here, however, she showed an unsuspected gift for sophisticated humour, and her zany wit and clean-cut dancing made her performance one of the delights of the season.

BOOKS *To Russia with love*

Memoirs, by Alexandre Benois (Chatto & Windus, 30*s.*).
Dancing for Diaghilev, the memoirs of Lydia Sokolova, edited by Richard Buckle (John Murray, 25*s.*).

TWO people, neither of them with a drop of Russian blood in them yet both with a great nostalgia for things Russian, link these two books which are the most important of their kind to appear in the past year. One by the "father of Russian ballet", Alexandre Benois, of very mixed ancestry, who turned out to be a most true Russian; the other by a true English girl, Hilda Munnings, who changed her name to Lydia Sokolova and became a most distinguished member of the Diaghilev Ballet.

Benois has said most of what he had to say about the Diaghilev Ballet, in which company he was part-instigator, advisor and one of its principal designers, when he wrote his *Reminiscences of the Russian Ballet* (published by Putnam) twenty years ago. Now he has put the cart before the horse and writes of his first twenty years in St. Petersburg in *Memoirs*. Like a magician in one of the ballets he so beautifully designed, Benois sits in his Paris flat where he recently died, and using his pen as a wand materialises a St. Petersburg at the end of the last century — its intellectual life, its personalities, its palaces and all the little incidents of family and everyday life which go to make a great city. In his toy theatres, his visits to the fairs which eventually influenced his *Petrushka*, his first visits to the ballet; in all this it is possible to put the pieces of the jig-saw puzzle together and discover just what it was that composed the person who later came to have such a vital influence on Diaghilev. In a preface by Benois' nephew — that fine actor, writer and person of the theatre, Peter Ustinov — he mentions that when he first went on the stage he received a letter from his uncle in which he said, "For centuries our family has been sniffing around the theatre. We have built them, decorated them, written scores for them, conducted in them, directed them. Now, at last, one of us has had the courage to leap on to the stage himself." This book is the story of that remarkable family.

Lydia Sokolova had no such background. Her mother came from Leyton in Essex and her father from Lowestoft, and they had no particular interest in the theatre. It seems to have been coster-girls dancing outside pubs who inspired little Hilda Munnings to perform her first impromptu steps to a barrel-organ outside the Convent School from which she escaped. After that it was Pavlova who aroused her interest in ballet. In gradual stages through various companies she eventually came to dance for Diaghilev. Now several people have written about the great man, but nobody yet has managed to bring him so alive as he appears to be in this book. Most people have made him into an almost menacing figure that instilled awe into everyone with whom he came in contact, a figure whom all respected but just a lay figurehead nonetheless. Sokolova makes him a human being, someone with greatness but also someone with all human failings and qualities, somebody whose imperious nature was streaked with veins of kindness. By her recalling little incidents such as when he used to sit with her and her baby in Spain, does he emerge as a person. But all through she shows remarkable insight into the character of those with whom she worked — Massine, Nijinsky, Marie Rambert and so many others crowd into her panorama which is so much more than a mere canvas. I find it remarkable that in those particular times there was an English girl, unused to the ways of the theatre, who accepted so much without question — both in the way of behaviour in the company and in the new trends of artistic expression which even today, over forty years later, might still be met with a certain drawing aside of skirts. As well as bringing out the personalities of others, she also reveals a bigness-of-heart in herself. Of her own work she is extremely self-critical and her pages are mercifully free of all those lengthy quotes of praise which deaden so many memoirs. She has done to others as she has done to herself by her astute and sound judgment of their performance — giving considered praise where it is due and constructive criticism where it was needed. Thus do many ballets and dancers most of us never saw become vivid for the first time.

As you dig deeper into the life of the company to which Sokolova remained faithful for sixteen years, the thought persists — would today's dancers ever stand up to life such as it was lived by the Diaghilev Ballet? It is, I fear, very doubtful, for in those days they had to have immense courage, devotion and dedication. Few people today have so much of all these attributes.

Apart from all this, these memoirs are eminently readable in their own right, and much of this must be due to the splendid editing job of Richard Buckle, who has subdued his own ebullient personality in bringing out the personality of somebody else. In addition, Murray's have done a magnificent job on the binding and printing. I shall reverently place Sokolova's volume on my shelves next to Karsavina's *Theatre Street* so that the best two books by dancers about dancers will rest together. **P.W.**

Dance and Dancers . . . . AT HOME

THE ROYAL BALLET
at Covent Garden
Linden's Beauty

UNTIL the very last act, Anya Linden's performance as Aurora was a rather up and down affair, marked by pleasant touches which were almost immediately blemished in effect by moments of agitation and tension. There is little doubt that her approach is sincere and that her appearance comes close to the ideal. But whereas previously her portrait seemed to be a sensible and spontaneous extension of her own personality, now she tends to force it so that the simple innocence becomes coyness and the whole effect one of oversweetening. The last act is a different matter. With the "Rose" *adagio* and the Vision scene behind her, which, incidentally, does not suit her so well as it does the more *legato* styles of Beriosova or Grey, and few worries about acting to inhibit her, her dancing became at once freer, sharper in phrasing, and near virtuoso in quality. But perhaps her main problem is one of general projection.

Desmond Doyle revealed a new-found assurance as Linden's Prince. He was more certain in partnering; more emphatic and reasonably imposing in presentation, and surer in his dancing. But, oh dear, he still seems horribly intimidated by his classical mime, which he throws away with mumbled apologies.

Merle Park and Graham Usher danced with spirit as the Blue Birds. Usher achieves a beautiful backbend in his *temps de poisson,* which are quite remarkable. Has anyone performed these better in recent years?

E. C. M.

BALLET CONCERT

ON June 22, Nadia Nerina and David Blair, both feeling somewhat masochistic no doubt, lent their services to an extraordinary entertainment devised at the Royal Festival Hall. The Alwyn Concert Orchestra, conducted by Kenneth Alwyn in person, permitted itself to be bathed in various vivid shades during a concert of ballet music. Now such a *son et lumière* programme could, I suppose, be a partial success if properly produced — if, for example, the musicians were set before some kind of backcloth, if colours were changed gradually, more subtly selected, and if they could be manipulated less wilfully regarding the structure of the compositions.

On this occasion, under the glare of amber, magenta or electric green, the musicians appeared to be ailing and looking decidedly debilitated and peaky with all natural colour obliterated from their faces. The slippery platform stage was about as wide as a cricket pitch and as long. Needless to say, the dancers could hardly do themselves justice, and certain changes of choreography had to be made. The items were Nerina's *Le Cygne* (Fokine) and the *Don Quixote* and *Casse-Noisette pas de deux*. Blair had trouble with his turns — no wonder, with a precipice gaping a few feet before him — and I'd not have been surprised if during Nerina's *manège* of turns in *Don Quixote,* which necessitated an abrupt change of direction, she had emerged from the platform brandishing a bow, while the leader of the orchestra fanned himself serenely.

E. C. M.

LUTYS DE LUZ

THE word "temperament" when applied to a dancer does not only mean somebody who hurls insults at managers and impresarios for one reason or another; it also applies to the physical and mental character of the dancer. The great failing of Lutys de Luz, who gave a week's season with a small group at the Metropolitan Theatre in Edgware Road, is that she has an untemperamental body. She performs steps correctly but her body does not appear to respond to the emotions of the music. In Spanish dancing this is unfortunate because it is possibly the most emotional music in the world. This does not mean that the dancer has to indulge in grotesque facial contortions and ludicrous exaggeration of line, but that arms, body and legs in perfect harmony respond instinctively to the rhythm and what the music has to say.

It was, I thought, unfortunate that Lutys de Luz was billed as "the successor to Argentina", because I saw little in her work that evoked the style or immaculate perfection of the great Antonia Mercé, certainly not in a *Pavane* in which a Valàzquez lady walks out of her frame, nor in any of the many varied numbers she gave in her second programme. She was at her best in a *Seguiriya* which, though lacking flamenco temperament, had grace and beauty of movement. Her numbers were interspersed with guitar and piano solos, a little flamenco singing and some spirited dancing by a young boy, Pablito. This competent presentation was obviously much to the taste of this theatre's audience.

P. W.

Dance and Dancers . . . . . ABROAD

FRANCE

THE OPERA COMIQUE

GEORGE SKIBINE'S *L'Ombre Lunaire* received its first performance at the Opéra Comique on May 19. But the work, which exploits a fantastic and somewhat morbid atmosphere, remains as confused in its inspiration as in its choreographic realisation, and it is difficult to extricate the general theme. The main, not to say its only, interest, rests in the interpretation of the principal rôle. Here indeed Peter Van Dijk has brought to life an immaterial and dreamy Pierrot, who is embodied with a melancholy tenderness, and around whom flutter in a rather disorderly manner the inconsistent and badly defined other characters. André Jolivet's score appears to feature two rather inexplicable pieces of borrowing, the march and *adage* from the earlier work, *Guignol et Pandore.* The rather badly lit décors of Stanislas Lepri manage to give in the semi-darkness an impression of a strange and tormented landscape.

On June 11, Ninon Lebertre, Jean-Bernard Lemoine and Michel Rayne danced in a revival of Jean-Jacques Etcheverry's *Pelléas et Mélisande,* which is based on Fauré's symphonic poem. The work was originally created at the Enghien Festival of 1953, and subsequently revived at the Théâtre de la Monnaie in 1955.

L'OMBRE LUNAIRE: *Peter Van Dijk in Skibine's new work. Photo: Lido.*

THEATRE DES NATIONS

ON May 24, the Folk Art Ensemble of Seoul (Korea) staged *Choon Hyang Jyun* or *The Perfumed Spring,* a choreographic version of a traditional opera. With a very Oriental slowness, the work tells of the numerous twists of fortune which in turn separate and reunite two lovers. The vocabulary taken from folk-lore appears extremely simple and in the groups not very expressive — which, of course, goes to hinder one's understanding of the plot. It possesses neither the deeper hieraticism of the Balinese or Cambodian styles, nor the acrobatic virtuosity and true sense of pantomime of Chinese opera. In order to stylise the comic characters, notably the valet and wicked governor, rôles performed by women *en travesti,* the production resorts to some naïve conventions. But more than the harshness and unexpected percussion effects of the music, at least the Western public can appreciate the graceful bearing and poses of the dancers, and the beauty of their silken robes, whose luminous colours stand out vividly in front of a dark curtain.

THE CARIBBEAN BALLET

ON May 19, the Théâtre de l'Etoile welcomed the Caribbean Ballet, a small company presenting Antilles folk-lore and making its first public appearance. To the throb of tom-toms and songs, it evoked in turn the landing of the slaves and their liberation, scenes of daily life, planting sugar-cane, hunting, dances of the bewitched, and the sacrifice of a virgin to a sacred serpent. Coloured dancers performed their simple evolutions with grace and flexibility against a décor which proved to be of the same conventional naïvety. It is a pity that the intervention of rather mediocre jazz distorted both the charming Creole songs and the nonchalant quadrilles, which Katherine Dunham knew how to turn to account more happily. It seems questionable that the future of this company should be orientated in this way of easy popularisation, which is, by the same token, banal.

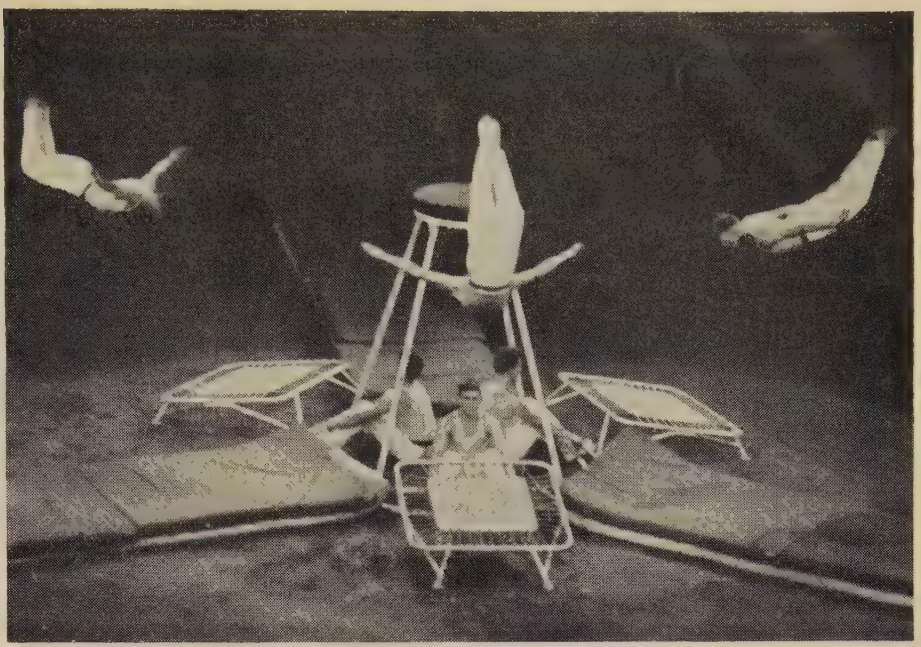
NEWS IN BRIEF

MAURICE BEJART has just signed a contract which places him at the head of the company at the Brussels Théâtre de la Monnaie, which the members of his own company have also recently joined. The interesting appointment should enable this young choreographer to give full rein to his abilities.

ON June 17, the Bibliothèque-Musée de la Danse de l'Opéra welcomed Yvette Chauviré, who signed her book, *Je suis une ballerine,* while Collette Sylva performed her amusing *L'Opèra, les autres et moi.*

TO celebrate the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Compagnie Générale de Télégraphie sans Fils, Zizi Jeanmaire and Roland Petit created *Les Electrons.* This was danced during a gala performance at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées, and its modern theme and abstract style could be said to have electrified the public.

UNDER the *avant-garde* banner Jacques Poliéri staged Fernando Arrabal's *Orchestration théâtrale* at the Théâtre de l'Alliance Française on June 1. Décors were inspired by the works of Delaunay, Klee, Malewicz and Mondrian, mobiles and stabiles after Calder and photograms by Etienne Weil. In addition to this, the Experimental Dance Theatre presented a programme at the Salle Récamier on June 11, which received a very mixed reception.



THEY FLY THROUGH THE AIR : Members of the R.A.F. Physical Training School soar through the air from springboards and trampolines during their display at the British Military Tournament and Tattoo which was a smash hit at Madison Square Garden in New York. The presentation included some 532 Servicemen and was the biggest presentation of its kind ever seen outside Britain.

IN honour of the anniversary of the birth of Isadora Duncan, a documentary exhibition was opened at the Akademia Raymond Duncan on May 27.

BRONISLAVA NIJINSKA is still rehearsing a complete version of *The Sleeping Beauty,* which the International Ballet of the Marquis de Cuevas is to present in October at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées. Before that date the company will return to the Théâtre Antique at Orange and also dance at Deauville and Biarritz during August.

Marie-Françoise Christout.

AMERICA

BRITISH MILITARY TOURNAMENT AND TATTOO

UNDER the aegis of impresario Sol Hurok, the 1959-60 season ended with a triumphal flourish and a bang at Madison Square Garden with the presentation of the British Military Tournament and Tattoo for a series of performances running from June 17 to July 4. (Interestingly enough, the 1960-1961 season will also open under the sponsorship of Hurok when he brings the Royal Ballet back to the United States to start its American tour with a four-week engagement at the Metropolitan Opera House beginning September 11.) Numbering some 532 British Servicemen, this was the largest aggregation ever to come to America for such an exhibition and it has been the biggest presentation ever offered in Madison Square Garden.

Webster's Dictionary describes a tattoo as "military evolutions of spectacular character accompanied by music". After witnessing the Dress Rehearsal (attended by American Servicemen who gave their British cousins a roaring welcome) and the very gala First Night, one can only add that neither Webster's definition nor advance appraisals did justice to the skill, spectacle, sportsmanship and superb direction of this mammoth programme. Although its director, Brigadier Alastair Maclean, and the 532 stalwart participants might be amused to hear it, one had the feeling that everything they did was, in a true sense, choreographed. Certainly, the most stirring event of the programme was the demonstration of gymnastics by the Royal Air Force School of Physical Training bounding and soaring in the air from springboards and trampolines. The *New York Times* described their appearance as "the thrust of salmon fighting their way upstream" while the *New York Herald-Tribune* claimed that these men proved "that the manned bomber is already obsolete; the British gymnasts need no aircraft to fly". For this observer, at least, their feats were the most dazzling bit of virtuosity to be seen hereabouts since Struchkova and Lapauri were flying in *Spring Waters* at Madison Square Garden just a year ago.

Other highlights were the Massed Pipes and Drums of the Scots Guards, the Seaforth Highlanders and the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (their music always has a marvellously eerie and wailing quality that is almost archaic). The Highland Dancing was, as always, superb, but this time there was far too little of it. The Royal Marine Commandos put on an amazing demonstration of sliding down ropes *head* first from the roof of Madison Square Garden and the crashing climax of the evening was the finale of the Massed Bands. This Tattoo was under the sponsorship of the Dollar Exports Council and the Federation of British Industries. Parenthetically, it must be added that the Tattoo generated a far clearer picture of a live and vital Britain than did the concurrent British Exhibition at New York's Coliseum that was long indeed on motors and machines but that almost totally overlooked such vital exports as ballet, theatre, cinema, books, magazines and newspapers. Indeed, one wonders if Lord Rootes and the committee of the Dollar Exports Council are aware of such institutions as the Royal Ballet and the manner in which one such organisation wins world acclaim and honour for Britain abroad. Because dance has become such a major ambassador of inter-

national goodwill and, henceforth, trade and exchange, it seems doubly unfortunate that it did not play some part (even in films or still pictures) at the British Exhibition.

GRAND KABUKI

THE Grand Kabuki from Japan, who presented a three-week season of three different programmes to capacity attendance at the New York City Center, were, aside from Martha Graham's recent season, the greatest theatrical event of the year and were on a par with the magnificence of last year's presentation of John Gielgud in *The Ages of Man* and the Bolshoi Ballet. Coming at a time when American and Japanese political relations were at their lowest ebb in years, their grace, beauty and stateliness conquered New York. As Brooks Atkinson put it so well in the *New York Times*, "New Yorkers receive them with the respect we owe all civilised persons. . . . For the theatre is decenter than politics."

Having the good fortune to attend the first programme with Ruth St. Denis, who saw this company in Tokyo in the mid-twenties when the Denishawn Company made its Oriental tour, it was even more rewarding than listening to an English language broadcast that was made from back-stage for those in the audience who were equipped with new miniature transistor radios with ear-phones. Because of her first-hand knowledge and deep understanding of Japanese arts and philosophy she, perhaps better than any of the New York critics, summed up their art most sagely when she whispered during mid-performance, "Here we have the miraculous blending of speech, movement (rhythm), design and colour in costume and décor, timing and the use of space."

Although New York audiences had already experienced the Kabuki Dancers brought here a few seasons back by Sol Hurok, it was quite another thing to see dance and movement as an integral *part* of the Kabuki Theatre. Indeed, it was not unlike the Greek National Theatre in effect, though totally different in style, since both present a unity of the arts that makes for truly lyric theatre. The Hanamachi (Flower Walk), which is a ramp leading to and from the stage at the left of the auditorium, gives a much greater sense of participation. (Interestingly enough, America has employed the "Hanamachi" in another manner, using it as a centre aisle runway for burlesque shows and beauty pageants.) The proscenium arch of the New York City Center was covered with a simple burlap frame with wooden seams, there was a raised wooden stage for the performers and a silk stage curtain containing 73,000 small sheets of gold foil fashioned after a painting by Korin Ogata.

Literally translated, "Kabuki" means "song" (Ka), "dance" (bu) and "drama" (ki). Only space limitations prohibit a complete description of the repertoire (an entire issue could easily be devoted to these artists), but two works — *Musume Dojoji* (The Maiden at the Dojo Temple) and *Takatsuki* — and the three stars — Nakamura Utaemon VI, Onoe Shoroku II and Nakamura Kanzaburo XVII — deserve the highest possible praise.

Musume Dojoji was adapted from a Noh play first presented in 1753 and in it Nakamura Utaemon portrays a maiden who appears at a Dojo Temple and asks to dance before the Priests who are dedicating a new bell. At first, the priests refuse her entrance because they recall in the past a priest who spurned a village girl. As a result, she turned herself into a great serpent and coiled herself around the priest and the bell and melted them. However, this time the maiden is allowed to see the dedication after she has said she will dance — and her dance might be interpreted as the phases of a woman's life, from infancy to maturity (also as a sort of dance of the seven veils since there are that many changes of costumes, though each is completely concealing). She changes her costumes as a snake changes its skin and, as the priests rise to drive her away, she climbs on to the bell and there reveals herself as indeed the serpent-demon. Nakamura Utaemon VI reveals his genius in the measured elegance and infinite subtlety in the depiction of this rôle and there was a tremendous inner dramatic authority and drive that gave the climax all of the impact and terror that grip the spectator at the conclusion of Graham's *The Cave of the Heart*. The picture of the triumphant and malevolent Utaemon swinging on the bell as the curtain descended created an indelible dance-theatre memory. (Indeed, what a rôle this would be for Martha Graham ! Strangely enough, after witnessing the Graham and Kabuki seasons so closely together, one can see how akin to the Orient Graham really is.)

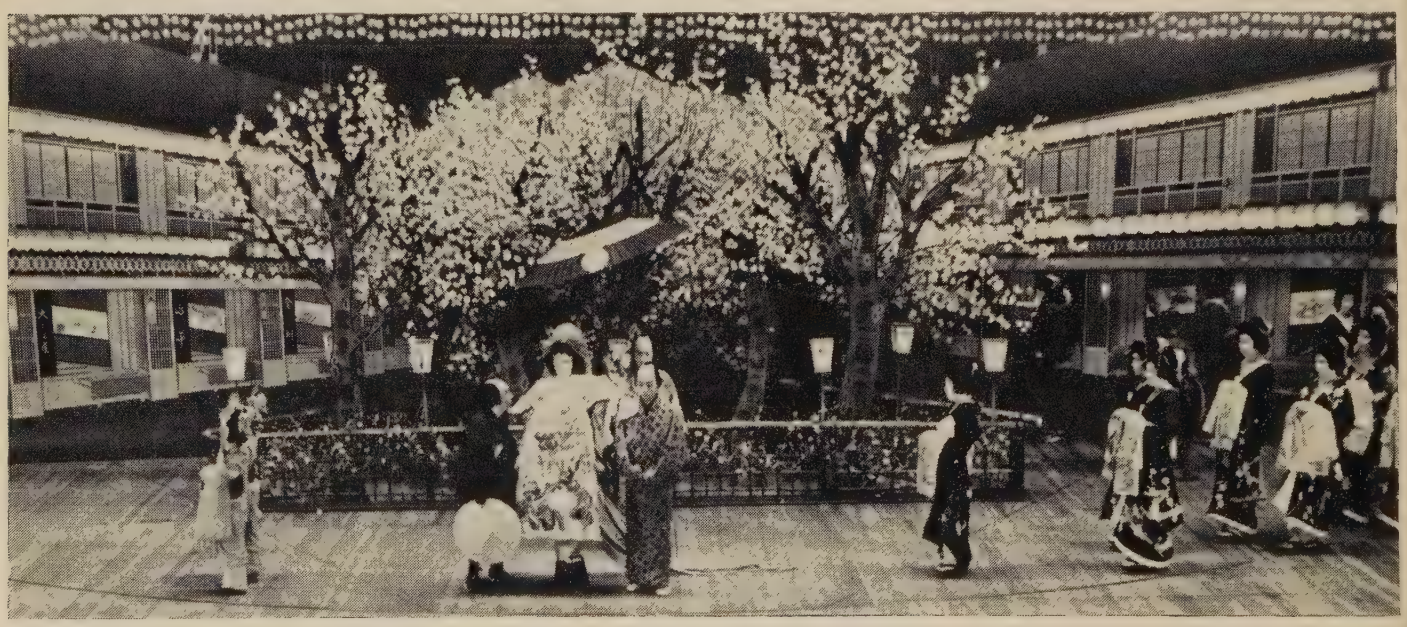
Quite the opposite was *Takatsuki*, first performed in 1933, which was a modern dance play written in imitation of the farcical interludes which relieve the solemnity of the Noh drama. In this delightful work, Nakamura Kanzaburo XVII portrays a servant who becomes drunk on saki and performs an hilariously reeling dance on clogs with tap overtones, that is sort of a glorious mélange of Charles Chaplin and Fred Astaire combined. From a dramatic point of view *Chushingura* (The Forty-Seven Ronin), dating from 1748, offers Onoe Shoroku II one of the great roles in the repertoire, and his mime in the long scene leading up to his commission of "seppuku" (disembowelment) was a masterpiece in facial expression and bodily movement.

These Japanese performers, whose art knows no time or place, possessed the stage like gods in the style of their ancestors. Inevitably, as did the Bolshoi Ballet, this troupe, too, will cause American dancers and audiences to re-evaluate our approaches to theatre art. The effect should be lasting and, for this, we are deeply indebted.

EAST DOES MEET WEST

WHILE the Grand Kabuki were appearing in New York, Martha Graham presented a private company class in her studio for Onoe Shoroku II and Madame Shoroku. These honoured guests were met at the studio door by Yuriko, a long-time soloist in the Graham company, and two scholarship students from Japan. It was indeed an unforgettable experience to sit on the low platforms, designed by Isamu Noguchi, and watch these distinguished guests observe the unfolding of the Graham technique in its purity and formality. At

KAGO TSURUBE : *A scene from one of the works given by the Grand Kabuki in New York. The company presented its great and ancient art under as similar conditions as possible to the method of presentation in Japan, using the "Hanamachi" (Flower Way) which links the auditorium with the stage.*



KAGO TSURUBE : *A scene from the Kabuki play, in English meaning* The Courtesan, *which was one of the many excerpts given by the Grand Kabuki in New York.*

MUSUME DOJOJI : *A final moment in* The Maiden at the Dojo Temple, *when the Maiden (Nakamura Utaemon) reveals herself to be the serpent-demon as she climbs on to the bell of the Dojo temple.*

the conclusion, Martha Graham made a deep Japanese bow to her guests and her company that was returned by these distinguished visitors. Later, over Japanese tea in another studio adjoining a garden, watching these Japanese artists mingle with the Graham dancers it was evident that indeed we already have one world, at least in so far as dance is concerned.

YURIKO TO GERMANY

DURING July, Yuriko, a leading soloist in Martha Graham's company, who is also remembered for her dance rôle in the New York stage and the screen version of *The King and I*, has been teaching a series of master classes in Graham technique at the Kurt Jooss school in Essen, Germany. Before returning to America, Yuriko is also planning a visit to London.

NEWS IN BRIEF

UNCONFIRMED gossip in New York has it that Anton Dolin has or will buy "Ballets Russe de Monte Carlo" from Sergei Denham.

COLUMBIA Broadcasting System has commissioned George Balanchine and Igor Stravinsky to create an hour-long contemporary dance and musical work based on the Biblical story of Noah. After its television première, this Stravinsky-Balanchine work is to be placed in the repertory of the New York City Ballet.

THE Royal Winnipeg Ballet plans a four-month tour, two months in Canada and two months in the United States, which will take them 10,000 miles across both countries.

JOSE LIMON, who was recently given the honorary degree of Doctor of Fine Arts by Wesleyan University, departs for South America, Mexico and Cuba on August 25th for a twelve-week tour under the auspices of ANTA and the President's International Exchange Programme.

AT long last, Isadora Duncan, one of America's dance immortals, has been nominated for the 13th quinquennial election of the Hall of Fame of Great Americans at New York University.

GALINA ULANOVA, of Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre, was one of five Soviets elected and named as honorary members of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

ANTONY TUDOR is to choreograph the Metropolitan Opera's revival of *Alcestis*. This new production is to have its première on December 6.

NBC-TV has announced that there will be still "another evening with Fred Astaire" during the coming season that will be an hour-long presentation.

CBS-TV is discussing the possibilities of a 60-minute special programme featuring the National Ballet of Canada.

JEROME ROBBINS and some 60 dancers have been, quite literally, dancing in the streets of New York while working on the film version of *West Side Story*.

Arthur Todd.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

Continued from page 19

Messel's costumes, and partly through the dancing itself, the first performance fell nearly as strangely flat as the orchestra. Nadia Nerina, the evening's Aurora, seemed subtly but definitely off-form. Her Rose Adagio had little of the dazzling quality we expect from Nerina, and although she improved as the evening wore on — the vision scene was a particular joy — it remained a mildly disappointing performance. (I might add that much of this disappointment was the price Nerina was paying for a brilliant season that has justifiably led her admirers, such as myself, to feel that with her, right now, the sky's the limit.)

The company was expecting to present a quintet of Auroras for this pre-American out-of-town opening for New York's favourite ballet. Unfortunately a minor leg injury to Antoinette Sibley kept her out of the cast (it would have been her first London Aurora) and then there were four. Of this quartet I had to miss Anya Linden, whose performance is reviewed elsewhere by E. C. Mason.

Annette Page, who danced Aurora on the first Saturday afternoon, proved crisp and confident. It was an unsophisticated portrayal, full of youthful attack rather than real brilliance. The characterisation — in this rôle always simple to conceive yet unexpectedly difficult to convey — was neatly shaded, and her whole performance had much more of an air about it than when she danced the part for the first time a year ago.

Like Page, Svetlana Beriosova when she came to dance the rôle in the evening had the advantage of a good deal better orchestral support than had been the lot of Nerina the night before. She responded with a performance of wonderful breadth and grandeur, indeed this was far and away the finest Aurora I have seen from her. Starting off with an exquisitely poised Rose Adagio she proceeded to go from strength to strength. Her phrasing was consistently exciting, and she deployed her superbly proud classic line to almost devastating effect. Like Nerina, Beriosova has had a gratifyingly successful season. Both of these ballerinas now prove themselves — and this is of vital importance to the future — capable of worthily leading the company in the absence of Fonteyn. At last the line of royal succession is unambiguous and secure — doubly secure, in fact, and everyone round about Bow Street must be justifiably giving two long drawn-out sighs of relief.

The three Florimunds for these three Auroras were as equally varied as their Princesses. David Blair and the less experienced Donald MacLeary (this was his London début as Florimund) both partnered supremely well, and it was particularly encouraging to see MacLeary doing with Beriosova just the same lifts as Blair had done the night before with Nerina. As a portrayal Blair's is by far the more polished and finished, although MacLeary brings a very personal air of romanticism to the Vision Scene. Blair danced a fiendishly difficult variation, including some *double tours en l'air* straight into *arabesque,* which although well performed somehow failed to make the effect it deserved. MacLeary, perhaps ill-advisedly, elected to dance the same variation, and although he got through it creditably he not unexpectedly looked even less effective than Blair. Curiously Ronald Hynd, dancing a far simpler variation consisting of little more than *jetés* and beats, in the event looked the best of the three. Covering the stage with exceptional vigour, he pointed the object lesson that the most difficult variations are not necessarily the most exciting. Although Hynd's partnering was not quite up to the standard of the other two, he has vastly improved of late and there was comparatively little in it. His acting as ever was excellent.

Acting of a different kind but equal quality came from Ray Powell, who has now made the most remarkable thing out of his Carabosse. This is no longer the pantomime dame of yesteryear, but a real creature of evil who adds immensely to the dramatic value of the sleeping beauty myth. (To be fanciful the main difference between the story of Aurora, and the story of Brünnhilde — the two classic awakenings of the lyric theatre — is in the nature of the opposition. This conception and portrayal of Carabosse produces evil of something more like Alberich/Hagen proportions, and the gain is an incalculable one.) The one place where I feel Powell could improve on his performance is in more clearly pointing the scene where he teases the four Princes with his invulnerability.

Anya Linden, the first-night Lilac Fairy, had quite an amount of the right authority for the part, but unfortunately her solo variation was altogether too lacking in precision. Better performances, in fact, came from the two Lilac Fairy debutantes, Vyvyan Lorrayne and Deanne Bergsma. Lorrayne danced the variation as well as I can recall, and Bergsma was not far off this standard, as well as producing slightly more radiance than Lorrayne at present commands. But both of these girls are already remarkably accomplished Lilac Fairies. There is no space to mention the rest of the cast in much detail. Both Brian Shaw and Graham Usher were, in their individual ways, exceptionally fine as the Blue Bird, the Fairies (among whom it was a particular pleasure to welcome back Maryon Lane) were by and large indifferent to good, Laurence Ruffell and Keith Milland, with, as ever, Alexander Grant still going just that one better, made an altogether admirable trio of Ivans who like quite a number of others in the cast refused to be doused by Messel's costumes. Two newcomers among the mimers deserve particular mention, Stanley Holden's delightful Gallison and Jacqueline Daryl's charming and plausible Countess. They showed a sense of style the cast as a whole lacked.

Clive Barnes.

NEXT MONTH

In the September number, look for: Stars of the BOLSHOI BALLET in London, A. V. COTON'S Moscow Diary, The Stockholm Festival by GENE PALATSKY, Reviews of BALLET RAMBERT's Three Wise Monkeys **and** La Sylphide, **FESTIVAL BALLET's** Bonaparte, **THE MEXICAN DANCE COMPANY.**

Ballet Dates

THE ROYAL BALLET
at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden
Joint Season

August

15 *Les Sylphides, Pineapple Poll, Birthday Offering*
16 *Pineapple Poll, Sweeney Todd, Blood Wedding*
17 *Les Sylphides, Pineapple Poll, Birthday Offering*
18 *Solitaire, Blood Wedding, Sweeney Todd*
19 *Coppélia* (Nerina, Blair), *Façade*
20 **(M)** *Solitaire, Coppélia* (Anderton)
20 **(E)** *Coppélia* (Park Burne), *Façade*
22 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Page, Hynd)
23 *Pineapple Poll, La Fête Etrange, Sweeney Todd*
24 *Solitaire, Blood Wedding, Sweeney Todd*
25 *Pineapple Poll, La Fête Etrange, Don Quixote pas de deux, Façade*
26 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Linden, Ashbridge)
27 **(E)** *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Seymour, Doyle)

End of Season

BALLET RAMBERT
at Sadler's Wells Theatre

July

18, 19 *La Reja, The Wise Monkeys* (première), *Czerny-ana, Hazana*
20, 21 *Two Brothers, La Sylphide* (Von Rosen, Flindt)
22 *Lilac Garden, Judgment of Paris, Dark Elegies, Gala Performance*
23 **(M)** *Coppélia*
23 **(E)** *Coppélia, Gala Performance*
25, 26 *Two Brothers, La Sylphide* (Aldous)
27 *La Reja, The Wise Monkeys, Czerny-ana, Hazana*
28 *Lilac Garden, Dark Elegies, Czerny-ana, Hazana*
29, 30 *Wise Monkeys, La Sylphide*

LONDON'S FESTIVAL BALLET
at the Royal Festival Hall, London.

July

19-21 *Les Sylphides, Bonaparte* (première), *Graduation Ball*
22-25 *Swan Lake* (Act 2), *The Witch Boy, Symphony for Fun*
26-28 *Napoli, The Pas de Quatre, Variations for Four, Prince Igor*
29-Aug. 1 *Swan Lake* (Act 2), *Romeo and Juliet, London Morning*
2-4 *Les Sylphides, Bonaparte, Graduation Ball*
5-8 *Swan Lake* (Act 2), *The Witch Boy, Symphony for Fun*
9-11 *Concerti, Vision of Marguerite, London Morning*
12-15 *Napoli, The Pas de Quatre, Variations for Four, Prince Igor*

For next month's programmes see daily press.

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INTERNATIONAL FESTIVALS

NERVI (Genoa): Company directed by Leonide Massine, July 8 to 28.
16-17: *Les Sylphides, Bal des Voleurs, Scheherazade*
22-14: *Cimarosiana, Choreatium, Le Beau Danube*

DUBROVNIK: July 10-August 24. The Serbian Folk Dance Company from Belgrade. The Croatian Folk Dance *Ensemble* from Zagreb. The Macedonian Folk Dancers from Skopje.

BAALBECK (Lebanon): July 16, 17, Beryl Grey and partner with Son et Lumiere; August 7-14, Lebanese Folklore Group

SANTANDER: July 30-August 2, International Folklore Display. August 9-13, American Ballet Theatre. August 21-24, Antonio and his Spanish Ballet.

EDINBURGH: at the Empire Theatre THE ROYAL BALLET

August

22-24 *Danses Concertantes, Le Baiser de la Fée, Petrushka.*
25-27 *Ballabile, La Peri,* or *Raymonda, Prince of the Pagodas* (Act 3)
29-31 SUSANA AND JOSE.

September

2-3 THE LITTLE BALLET TROUPE OF INDIA
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5-7 *Schéhérazade, Choreartium, Le Beau Danube*
8-10 *Commedia Umana* (Decameron)

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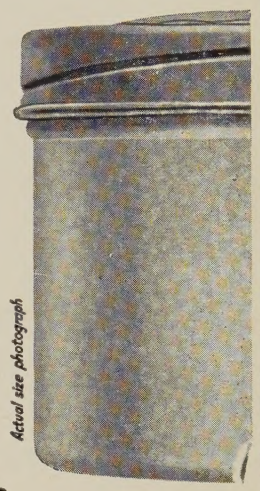

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